America's
FAMILY SUPPORT
Magazine

Spring 2002 ■ Volume 21 Number 1

SPECIAL FOCUS
EVALUATING FAMILY SUPPORT

COVER STORY
Family Support Connecticut

Metamorphosis

La Comunidad es como la Mariposa

Yoland Trevino on Leadership

Harry Potter and Family Support

A mother and child play together at Charter Oak Family Resource Center in West Hartford, one of Connecticut's many family support programs (see page 48).

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Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month—and a great time to spread the word among staff and participants about how to strengthen families to prevent neglect and abuse. For prevention tips and promotional materials from this year's campaign, contact:

- The Child Abuse Prevention Month 2002 Web site at www.calib.com/nccanch/prevmnth/welcome/index.htm
- The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information at 800/934–3366 or nccanch@calib.com
- Prevent Child Abuse America at 800/CHILDREN or www.preventchildabuse.org

A Snappy Project Celebrates All Ages

Get out your cameras: Generations United, with support from the MetLife Foundation's Healthy Aging Initiative, is holding an amateur photography contest to find inspiring pictures that capture the power of intergenerational relationships. Winning photos will be featured at the organization's conference and event exhibits.

Send entries (print and negative) by June 15 to:

Generations United
Attn: IG Photo Contest
122 C Street, NW, Suite 820
Washington, DC 20001-2109

For more information, visit www.gu.org or call 202/638-1263.

Reducing Juvenile Lock-Ups Reaps Results

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has found—through evaluations of its Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative—that communities can lock up fewer youths without compromising public safety.

The three model sites in the program—Multnomah County, Oregon; Cook County, Illinois; and Santa Cruz County, California—reduced their reliance on juvenile detention by improving screening, streamlining case processing, and expanding community-based alternatives. At the same time, juvenile crime rates in the counties dropped. And, in Multnomah County, $2 million a year was saved—money that the county has diverted to other needed services for families.

For more information, visit www.aecf.org/initiatives/jdai/.

Medicaid Funding for Children's Mental Health

If you work with children with serious mental or emotional disorders or their families, you may be eligible to receive Medicaid funding for rehabilitation services. The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law offers a variety of resources to help you understand what services are covered by Medicaid, who is eligible, and how to apply.

The center's *Making Sense of Medicaid for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance* reviews how community-based programs can support children on Medicaid who need mental health care and surveys 68 programs and innovative approaches in several states. To order this or other guides, visit www.bazelon.org or e-mail pubs@bazelon.org.

Testing Teens' Pregnancy Prevention Know-How

Despite recent declines, 4 out of 10 girls in the U.S. get pregnant at least once by age 20. Educating teenagers about preventing pregnancy, though, is a difficult job at best. To help, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is launching a simple online quiz just for teens on May 8—the first annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The interactive quiz, developed in partnership with *Teen People*, leads teens through real-life scenarios and lets them decide how they would react in certain risky situations. Mark your calendars—and those of the youth you work with—to visit www.teenpregnancy.org on May 8.

Latino Kids Need Homes

As of March 31, 2000, there were 88,939 Hispanic children in foster care—15 percent of the national total. Yet Latino families are under-represented among foster and adoptive families. In 1998, the Child Welfare League of America found that only 127 of a total of 31,128 adoptive families surveyed were Latino.

Since Latino families tend to be large, many Latino foster children are part of sibling groups—and programs often find it hard to place them together in foster care and in adoptive homes. In addition, many Latino children are in need of Spanish-speaking foster caregivers who also understand the cultures from which they come.

To help programs find innovative ways to recruit more Latino foster families, the Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support has released a resource document on the topic that includes a discussion of cultural issues and a list of model programs and resources. Check it out at www.casey.org/cnc/recruitment/latino_recruitment.htm

For other foster care resources and advocacy tools, download the center's National Foster Care Month Toolkit—developed to spread the word about the role of foster families throughout the month of May—at www.casey.org/cnc/foster_care_month/.

Parents: The Best Anti-Drug

All parents worry about their teens using drugs or alcohol. Help ease their concerns by reminding them that their involvement is the best anti-drug on the market.

A survey conducted by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that teens with parents who have a "hands-off" parenting style are four times more likely to smoke, drink, and use illegal drugs than teens with parents who are more involved. The center offers parents the following suggestions to help them build strong relationships with their teens:

- Become active participants in your teen's life
- Regularly help with homework
- Encourage your teen to seek your help on important decisions
- Eat dinners frequently as a family
- Attend religious services regularly and make religion important to the life of your teen
- Praise and discipline your teen when merited
- Know what your teen is doing after school
- Know where your teen is on weekends

Help Keep Your School's Lights On

On October 10, schools in communities across the country will be keeping their lights on with activities celebrating the importance of and need for quality after-school programs.

The only nationwide event celebrating after-school programs, Lights On Afterschool! helps show community members and policymakers how after-school programs improve academic achievement, keep kids safe, and help working families.

To find out if a school in your community is hosting a Lights On Afterschool! event—or for information on how to get involved—visit www.afterschoolalliance.org or call 202/261-3566.

Looking Special Needs in the Eye

Do the toddlers in your program look you in the eye? Does your 14-month-old use one side of her body more than the other? Do the three-year-olds in your life laugh at silly faces? All of these questions help determine if a child has or is developing special needs.

The Center for the Improvement of Child Caring has just released a comprehensive new book and on-line resource for parents and anyone who works with families. *The CICC Discovery Tool* enables users to assess risk factors leading to special needs and spot signs that such needs are developing—so that children can get treatment and parents can get support as early as possible. The tool includes 11 age-appropriate questionnaires. Users can fill out the questionnaires, enter their results and get a score on-line at www.ciccparenting.org, then print out the results page to share with the family's doctor or others collaborating to support the family.

The author, Dr. Kerby T. Alvy, is a founding member of Family Support America. The Center for the Improvement of Child Caring trains family support center staff to provide "high-quality parenting skill-building programs for the families in their communities," says Alvy. The organization has numerous resources specifically for families of color.

The Discovery Tool and other CICC resources are available at www.ciccparenting.org.

President & CEO, Family Support America
Virginia L. Mason

America's Family Support Magazine

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Family Support America promotes family support as the nationally recognized movement to strengthen and support families and places the principles of family support practice at the heart of every setting in which children and families are present. By identifying and connecting individuals and organizations who have contact with families; by providing technical assistance, training and education, conferences, and publications; and by promoting the voice of families, Family Support America is taking family support to scale as the national strategy for ensuring the well-being of our children today and in the years to come.

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This publication was produced with the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Princeton, N.J.), the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

Happy Surfing

When *America's Family Support Magazine* arrived on Monday, what a wonderful surprise it was to see a full-page write up about our Web site ("Surf's Up," vol. 20, no. 4)! My Web designer and writer, Mouncey Ferguson, worked long and hard over the summer to design both the layout and the content. Although we will never know how many people will visit our Web site due to the write-up, it's nice to know that so many of your readers will have the opportunity. Thank you.

Sue Ferguson
Chair
National Coalition for Parent
Involvement in Education
Fairfax, Virginia

Supporting the Field

Like no other organization, Family Support America has provided inspiration for us and others in the field by being a vital source for the latest trends in research, best practice, political/advocacy opportunities, and so much more. The value of what we have received from Family Support America is beyond measure. You have helped Birth To Three to carry out our mission "to strengthen families and promote the well-being of children through parenting education and support" and to always work toward providing the very best quality programs and services for families.

Minalee Saks
Executive Director
Birth To Three
Eugene, Oregon

Parents Work Hard

We are amazed to know that there is a voice in America for parents who are working hard to strive for excellence in their community, an organization that helps engage and honor parents' voices in the family support movement. Family Support America is grounded in the goals of social justice, democracy, parent leadership, and the development of partnerships between parents and professionals.

We need the resources Family Support America offers so that we can better serve children and families in our community.

Rosie Watkins
President/CEO
Family Development Task Force Inc.
Basic Skills Learning Center
Cordele, Georgia

Send your letters to:

Family Support America
Attn: AFSM Letters
20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste. 1100
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Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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Conference 2002 Highlights—
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the time has come!

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FamilyWise Steers Family Support into Deeper Waters

This issue's special focus section on family support evaluation comes at a critical moment. Funds are diminishing at a time when demand for the vital services and supports programs offer is growing. In the midst of our nation's economic downturn, there is pressure from many sides to substantiate the need for resources devoted to family support, and evaluation is the means for doing so.

Effective evaluation promotes quality practice and reports on measurable outcomes. Over the years, Family Support America has led several efforts and discussions and has created a growing body of knowledge and resources on evaluation. It is now time to bring those efforts together, to create tools and build capacity so that it is possible—as our special focus section says— to "tell the story of family support" to all important audiences.

With the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Family Support America is embarking on a new evaluation initiative—the FamilyWise National Family Support Evaluation Project. Through a partnership with states participating in the States Initiative, a new approach to evaluation is being developed. It will build on all of Family Support America's past work in evaluation, including promotional indicators and *How Are We Doing? A Program Self-Assessment Toolkit for the Family Support Field*. It will be based on the principles of family support practice, which means it will include participatory and culturally relevant approaches. It will result in tools and methods for gathering important information on the impact of family support and ways to communicate that information that are likely to result in appropriate policies.

The planning phase of FamilyWise began in September 2001 and concludes in June 2002. The emphasis has been on gathering information on existing evaluation thinking, tools, and strategies and on determining what needs to be done. To that end, Family Support America has convened thought leaders representing family support practice, research, and evaluation; held focus groups with families and programs; gathered the knowledge of States Initiative participants; and commissioned reviews of the relevant literature.

As this phase concludes, it is clearer than ever that the principles of family support must be practiced in the carrying out of evaluation and in the communication of evaluation results. It is also clear that knowing whom the field encompasses, what programs do, and whom they serve is vital to telling the story of family support. To those ends, we are expanding the National Family Support Mapping Project and integrating it into FamilyWise. I encourage each of you, if have not done so, to get on the map and become part of the family support story. All you have to do is visit www.familysupportamerica.org and complete a mapping survey.

The second phase of FamilyWise will begin in July. It will be a pilot phase in which the concepts and ideas developed in the planning phase will be brought to the field for refining, honing, and modification. At the conclusion of phase two, an evaluation framework, process, and methodology should be in place. Then, early in 2003, the implementation phase will begin. It should last for at least three years.

The special focus section at the center of this issue of *America's Family Support Magazine* gives a full description of the history of family support and evaluation and presents a more detailed explanation of the FamilyWise initiative. As this project unfolds, you can expect to see the development of new knowledge about family support and its impact, a series of papers addressing existing knowledge and current issues, and a set of tools and guides for use in the field.

To quote Robin Higa, a member of the Family Support America Board of Directors, this evaluation effort will not so much change the course of our efforts as move them into deeper waters. I invite you to come along for the journey. Individual family support practitioners, parent leaders, policymakers, and others working to strengthen and support families are crucial partners in telling the story of family support's success in ways that impact policy and improve the lives of families.

Virginia L. Mason, President & CEO

Ask Me If I Care

Public Forums Get Candidates Thinking about Family Support

by Shamara Riley

With November elections just months away, now is the time to start planning ways to raise awareness among candidates and voters alike about the needs and strengths of America's families.

Getting involved in election-time activities offers dual benefits: publicizing meetings with candidates increases media coverage of family support, and building connections with local politicians gets your foot in the door to promote family-supportive policies in the future.

Join with program participants and neighbors to set up a forum in which you can meet with candidates to share your experiences and community's needs. Use the opportunity to provide accurate information to the candidate and his or her staff about the benefits of family support. Start by asking candidates the right questions:

A candidates' forum is an opportunity for your program to spread the word about the power and promise of family support.

1. Are your vision and agenda aligned with family support?

Ask the candidate what family support means to him or her. Assess how families fare in the candidate's agenda. Determine whether his or her vision emphasizes building on the strengths of families, as opposed to relying on punitive measures.

2. What specific commitments have you made on behalf of family support?

Don't just take the candidate's word for it—research his or her voting record and any specific pledges he or she has made on issues such as welfare reform, childcare, education, youth development, and violence prevention. Encourage the candidate to sign a pledge outlining changes that your program would like to see in your community. Web sites such as www.vote-smart.org provide free, non-partisan information on thousands of candidates across the nation, including their voting records on a range of issues. These sites often also provide links to candidates' own Web pages.

3. How much of a champion have you been for the family support cause?

Determine the ways in which the candidate has spread the word about family support. Has he or she played a role in promoting legislation that strengthens families or that responds to emerging community issues? This assessment will help you determine whether a candidate will go the extra mile on behalf of families in your community.

4. Do you acknowledge the diversity of today's families?

Does the candidate acknowledge two-parent families, single parents, stepfamilies, and adoptive families, just to name a few, when making presentations or in campaign materials? Judge how well the candidate's visual and written materials communicate this diversity.

5. Do you want to come visit our program?

Nothing is more persuasive in helping candidates understand family support than to show it to them in action. Invite candidates to participate in a family support activity.

A candidates' forum is a great opportunity for your program to spread the word about the power and promise of family support. To invite candidates to your event, fax a written request to their schedulers at their campaign offices and follow up with a telephone call. (Since federal guidelines may prevent you from engaging in partisan activities, be sure to invite all candidates to any event you sponsor.)

You may wish to invite your local media to cover the forum—which also increases the likelihood that candidates will participate—to bring attention to your program. Make sure to let the candidates' schedulers know if any media (and whom) will be present.

By leveraging the election season to bring attention to family support, you can further build relationships with policymakers and send a united message to change the way America works for families.

Shamara Riley is director of communications and conference coordinator at Family Support America. She has previously worked as a get-out-the-vote coordinator for a state legislator.

The magic Factor

A New Way to Think about Your Program, Courtesy Harry Potter

by Paul Vivian

As I made my way into the Westwoods Alternative Middle School one afternoon, I sensed that something was different. I could hear my shoes as they made their way across the polished floor. But why had my shoes suddenly become squeaky? I wondered. Then it dawned on me: it wasn't my shoes—the building had become eerily quiet. Since this is a school that contains the most troubled and troubling adolescents in the school system, it is rarely a quiet place. Such stillness meant one of two things—either something explosive had just happened, the veritable lull after the storm, or the entire school was on a field trip.

I cautiously made my way down the corridor, fully expecting to find that a disaster had just taken place. So I was not prepared to walk into a classroom and see one of the teachers reading to the students. The expressions on their faces gave a whole new meaning to the term "rapt attention." As I sat and listened, I, too, was caught up in the "magic" of the story. The teacher, Kris Irvine, glanced up at me with a look that said, "Do you believe this?" and continued to read. Whenever she paused, the students would urge her to continue. This wasn't just any old story—the book she was reading was J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

Harry Potter reminds us of the importance of the loyalty of friends, the power of a parent's love for her child during a difficult time, and the need we all sometimes feel to become invisible.

I have always believed that the pen is mightier than the sword, but I had never before witnessed such a powerful example. I have thought about that day and the Harry Potter phenomenon a great deal since, and I have come to the conclusion that since September 11th, we all need a little magic in our lives. Harry Potter reminds us of the importance of the loyalty of friends, the power of a parent's love for her child during a difficult time, and the need we all sometimes feel to become invisible.

Much has been written about how our country has come together since September 11th, how the important things in life have taken center stage. But, like Harry Potter, our triumphs have not materialized without struggle. And, as Harry himself also learns, sometimes the most surprising ways of creating magic enable us to succeed. There is a great scene in the book, for instance, where Harry and his friends discover that music is the only way to soothe a ferocious three-headed dog. As I watched these students listen so attentively as Harry's adventure unfolded, I was reminded that we all need, and can find, magic in our lives.

Rather than evaluating programs solely on the numbers served, for example, maybe we ought to be looking at whether these programs created magic for the families served and the communities in which they reside.

We all have the capacity to create magic—whether within our own families, the programs that we run, or the families that we serve. In fact, we should consider it an essential ingredient in everything we do. As with Harry Potter, the magic in our lives might not always be apparent to us; it sometimes appears in the most mundane ways. At one point in Harry's story, he finds a magic mirror in which he sees what he most desires; the mirror reveals, to Harry only, his parents, who have long since died. Doesn't this suggest that each of us

experiences magic, perhaps not apparent to anyone else—that we all have relationships, memories, and skills that are magical?

Maybe, when we plan and evaluate family support programs, we ought to be thinking about "the magic factor." Rather than evaluating programs solely on the numbers served, for example, maybe we ought to be looking at whether these programs created magic for the families served and the communities in which they reside. Such a change in focus would challenge each of us to look at our planning and evaluating efforts through a much larger lens—a magical mirror, if you will.

Taking chances—whether by reading *Harry Potter* to a group of students, sneaking with your friends past a three-headed dog, or trying out a unique program idea—can sometimes lead to magic.

The suggestion to read *Harry Potter* wasn't written in any special education textbook or discussed in any graduate class that Kris took. What, then, possessed her to suddenly read to these students? What inspired her to take this risk? When I asked her, she said, "I took a chance. I have always loved reading, and I thought that, just maybe, they would also like *Harry Potter*."

Taking chances—whether by reading *Harry Potter* to a group of students, sneaking with your friends past a three-headed dog, or trying out a unique program idea—can sometimes lead to magic. Contained inside each and every one of us, it is up to us to find it.

Paul Vivian, consultant and lecturer on the importance of family support centers, lives in Connecticut with his wife and three sons.

The road to raising a child can take some unexpected turns.

Here's the map.

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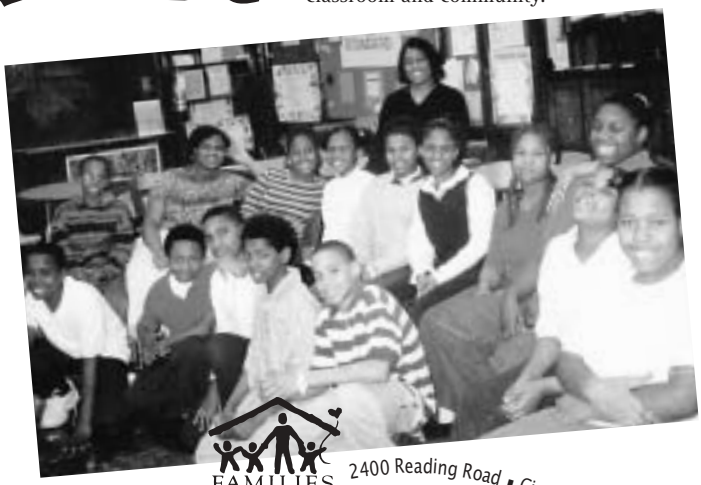

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Principles of Family Support Practice

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.

2. Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members—adults, youth, and children.

3. Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.

4. Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.

5. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.

6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.

7. Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.

8. Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.

9. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

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How a Community Is Like a Butterfly

Former family support program director Yoland Trevino reflects on her role in a community's transformation

Metamorphosis

by
Yoland Trevino

Metamorfosis: La Comunidad es como la Mariposa

My style, my manner of leadership, evolved from my own personal work with internalized oppression.

I began to experience this oppression as a child born in Guatemala City in Central America. As a child, I did not know that my cultural legacy was one of the most outstanding civilizations in the world. The Mayan civilization was creator of the calendar and of open heart surgery, when Europe was still in the dark ages. How was it, then, that our educational systems instilled in us a sense of inferiority?

The results are a system of social organizations where patriarchy, imperialism, and racism reign. Oppressive behavior continues to this day. When we work in multicultural communities and we superimpose Western models and approaches, we do not honor the ancient wisdom inherent in people of color.

> My assumption is that many parents are "diamonds in the rough waiting to be discovered."

From my first day as director of the Vaughn Family Center, I knew that to enhance parents' capacity required my role to be fundamentally different from that of a typical director or manager. I saw my role as:

- Mentor
- Coach
- Weaver of dreams
- Facilitator
- Catalyst
- Nurturer
- Catcher of dreams

I saw my role as unleashing human capital. I saw my goal as serving in a transitional and bridging role. From the beginning, I met people in the community who could do my job, if given support and opportunity. Over a five-year period, a short period of time in community transformation, I succeeded in passing my role as director onto those within the community.

Diamonds in the Rough

In many cultures, where we fit in the class strata can determine our place in society. Many members of our impoverished communities have experienced multigenerational oppression. My assumption is that many parents are "diamonds in the rough waiting to be discovered." In my opinion, the process of unleashing the human capital inherent in impoverished communities is not complicated or a secret. Directors of programs and centers

Mi estilo, mi manera de liderazgo, evolucionó de mi propio trabajo personal con opresión interiorizada.

Empecé a tener la experiencia de la opresión como niña nacida en la Ciudad de Guatemala en Centro América. Como niña no sabía que mi herencia era una de las civilizaciones más sobresalientes del mundo. La civilización maya era creadora del calendario, y de la cirugía del corazón abierto, cuando Europa aún estaba en la alta edad media. ¿Cómo fue eso que nuestro sistema educativo inculcó en nosotros un sentir de inferioridad?

Esto resulta en una sistema de organizaciones sociales en donde reinan el sistema de patriarquilla, imperialismo y racismo. El comportamiento opresivo continúa hoy en día. Cuando trabajamos en comunidades multiculturales y superponemos modelos y métodos del Occidente, no honramos la sabiduría antigua que es innata en la gente de color.

> Mi suposición es que muchos padres son "diamantes ásperos, esperando a ser descubiertos."

Desde mi primer día en el Centro Familiar Vaughn, supe que mi papel fuera fundamentalmente diferente del de un director o gerente típico. Yo veía mi papel como:

- Mentora
- Entrenadora
- Tejedora de sueños
- Facilitadora
- Catalista
- Nutridora
- Alcanzadora de sueños

Yo veía que mi papel era de desenlazar el capital humano. Yo veía mi meta en servir en un papel de transición y de ser un puente. Desde el principio conocí a gente en la comunidad que podrían hacer mi trabajo, si se les daba el apoyo y la oportunidad. A través de un período de cinco años, un tiempo corto en la transformación de una comunidad, logré transferir mi papel de directora a aquellos dentro de la comunidad.

Diamantes Ásperos

En muchas culturas, el lugar que ocupamos en el nivel de clase puede determinar nuestro lugar en la sociedad. Muchos miembros de nuestras comunidades de bajos recursos han tenido la experiencia de opresión multi-generacional. Mi suposición es que muchos padres son "diamantes ásperos, esperando a ser descubiertos." En mi opinión, el proceso de desatar el capital humano que se encuentra en comunidades de bajos recursos no

in impoverished neighborhoods must cultivate this brilliance. They must provide formal leadership in the process of:

- Fostering relationships
- Awakening the consciousness of self-mastery
- Creating the relational space to co-construct possibilities
- Engaging others to join together around a compelling vision

Central to this process for people who have internalized their oppression is ongoing mentoring so that they can begin to see a different reflection in the mirror. This is done by continually reaffirming and seeking the inherent wisdom and knowledge found within each one of us. Of course, unleashing this wisdom is individualized and developmental. With the proper support, people begin to emerge out of their cocoon of historical oppression. As newly born beautiful butterflies, they begin to see their beauty and worth. This stage is extremely important to support, recognizing that, like a newly emerged butterfly, their wings are fragile and delicate. It is important to nurture this growth, to encourage expansion of parents' abilities, and, most importantly, to get out of the way when they are ready to fly.

This requires a paradigm shift within organizations, moving from hierarchies to networks, from service recipient to agent of change. Additionally, embracing other ways of knowing from other cultures as valid and viable is important when we work in multi-national and multicultural communities.

Words are Worlds

Words are charged with meaning that can edify or diminish people. If you listen carefully to many "experts" in the field, you can detect the artificial separations inferred in their speech. Unfortunately, many professional disciplines have created their own language that further isolates. When people do not understand these codes, this further fuels mistrust. For example, well-meaning people who use the buzzword "empower" can further fuel the notion that we do not have "personal power" unless someone empowers us. I prefer to use language that expresses our interdependency and interconnectedness. Expressions such as not doing "for people" or "to them," but "with them." When we shift our language, we move from disassociated parts and entrenched ideas to integrated wholes and emergent, organic, unfolding visions.

With the proper support, people begin to emerge out of their cocoon of historical oppression.

If we operate in a deficit mode, trusting the community can be a frightening proposition. If we operate from an asset mode, anything becomes possible, given enough time and support. I

es complicado ni es un secreto.

Los directores de programas y centros en vecindarios pobres deben de cultivar estos talentos, deben proveer liderazgo formal en el proceso de:

- Promover relaciones
- Despertar el conocimiento interior de nuestra propia maestría
- Crear el espacio relacional para construir en sociedad las posibilidades
- Atraer a otros a unirse juntos alrededor de una visión cautivante para motivar el cambio

Central a este proceso para gente que ha interiorizado su opresión, es el continuo apoyo de un mentor para que puedan empezar a ver un reflejo distinto. Esto se hace al reafirmar continuamente y al buscar el conocimiento y sabiduría internos que se encuentran en cada uno de nosotros. Por supuesto, desatar esta sabiduría es individualizado y es desarrollable. Con el apoyo apropiado, las personas empiezan a surgir de su capullo de opresión histórica. Como una bella mariposa recién nacida empiezan a ver su belleza y su valor. Es extremadamente importante apoyar esta etapa, reconociendo que como una mariposa recién nacida las alas son frágiles y delicadas. Es importante cuidar este crecimiento para animar la expansión de sus habilidades, y lo más importante, hacerse a un lado cuando ya estén listos para volar.

Esto requiere un cambio de posición del paradigma dentro de las organizaciones, que se cambien de jerarquías a interconexiones. Además, aceptar otras maneras de conocimiento de otras culturas como válidas y realizables es importante cuando se trabaja en comunidades multi-nacionales y multiculturales.

Palabras son Mundos

Las palabras están cargadas con significado que pueden edificar o disminuir a la gente. Si uno escucha cuidadosamente a muchos "expertos" en este campo, uno puede detectar las separaciones artificiales insinuadas en su hablar. Desdichadamente, muchas disciplinas profesionales han creado su propio lenguaje el cual aísla aún más, a no ser que uno aprenda los códigos. Cuando la gente no comprende estos códigos, esto intensifica la desconfianza. Por ejemplo, gente con buenas intenciones que usan la frase de moda "empoderar" puede intensificar la idea que no tenemos "poder personal" a no ser que alguien nos dé poder. Yo prefiero usar el lenguaje que expresa nuestra interdependencia y interconexión. Expresiones tales como no "hacer

Con el apoyo apropiado, las personas empiezan a surgir de su capullo de opresión histórica.

offer here a sampling of social assets that, together at the Vaughn Family Center, we identified within our own community:

- Entrepreneurial
- Willing to be bold
- Deep love for family
- Grounded in spiritual strengths
- Believers in the American dream
- Respectful of education
- Respectful of elders
- Promoters of self-advocacy

When the Vaughn Family Center opened, it reflected an atmosphere of acceptance and invited parents to come in as if they were at home. One by one, parents started speaking with others about the vision. Parents would assess others' talents and find ways of involving everyone in the center's operation.

This phase of unleashing human capital is very critical for both parents and service providers. Once parents experience being treated with dignity and respect, they do not want to tolerate anything else. I found many angry outbursts were triggered by pent-up emotions and the difficulty of finding expressive words. An important aspect of my day was taking the time to listen deeply. This gave me an opportunity to reframe issues and rechannel anger into passionate advocacy.

por la gente," o "para la gente," pero "con la gente." Cuando modificamos nuestro lenguaje, nos movemos de partes desasociadas e ideas firmemente establecidas a enteros integrados y visiones surgentes, orgánicas y en desarrollo.

Si operamos en un medio de déficit, confiar en la comunidad puede ser una propuesta alarmante. Si operamos de un medio de cualidades valiosas, cualquier cosa llega a ser posible, dándole suficiente tiempo y apoyo. Enseguida ofrezco una muestra de cualidades sociales, que juntos en el Centro Familiar Vaughn, identificamos dentro de nuestra propia comunidad:

- Espíritu empresarial
- Dispuestos a ser audaces
- Amor familiar profundo
- Cimentados en la fuerza espiritual
- Creyentes del sueño Americano
- Respetuosos a la educación
- Resetuosos a la ancianidad
- Promoviendo la auto-abogacía y acción

El ambiente en el Centro Familiar Vaughn reflejaba una atmósfera de aceptación e invitaba a los padres a entrar como si estuvieran en casa. Uno por uno, los padres empezaron a hablar con otros acerca de la visión. Los padres evaluaban los involucrar a todos en las operaciones del centro.

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When the service providers served on committees and worked alongside parents, the experience of "appreciative listening," of hearing both anger and hope, transformed many of them. On many occasions, parents were echoing the dreams that service providers had for their own children and communities. They mutually discovered that their visions were similar. This interaction served to mutually connect them and to change the way service providers performed their work.

> Unleashing human capital and recognizing the brilliance in all people is the only way we can all be liberated.

Community building goes beyond service delivery; it begins to mobilize the voice of the poor through self-advocacy and direct action. Service delivery has its role, but real change requires changing the way things are and not just complementing or supplementing what is being provided.

The way we organize things can become a structure for maintaining dependency. Professionals do have skills and experiences to offer. But so do people in the community. Defining roles and

Esta fase del desenlazamiento del capital humano es muy crítica para padres y proveedores de servicios. Una vez los padres tienen la experiencia de ser tratados con dignidad y respeto, ya no quieren tolerar otra cosa. Encontré que muchos arrebatos eran provocados por emociones reprimidas y la dificultad de encontrar palabras expresivas. Un aspecto importante de mi día era el tomar el tiempo para escuchar con profundidad. Esto me dio la oportunidad de reclasificar asuntos y acanalar este enojo a intercesión apasionada.

Cuando los proveedores de servicios servían en comités y trabajaban a la par de los padres, la experiencia de "escuchar apreciativamente," de escuchar el enojo y la esperanza, transformó a muchos de ellos. En muchas ocasiones los padres tenían ecos de los sueños que los proveedores de servicios tenían para sus propios niños y sus comunidades. Mutuamente descubrieron que sus visiones eran similares. Esta interacción sirvió para conectarles mutuamente y a cambiar la manera en que los proveedores de servicios conducían su trabajo.

El desarrollo de una comunidad va mas allá del reparto de servicios; empieza a movilizar la voz del pobre a través de autoabogacía y acción directa. El reparto de servicios sí tiene su papel, pero el cambio verdadero requiere cambiar como están las cosas, y no sólo complementar ó suplir lo que se provee.

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harnessing the partnership between the two is important. But equally important, the community contribution needs to be valued more fully, both within the partnerships and by those responsible for decision making and resource allocation.

Unleashing human capital and recognizing the brilliance in all people is the only way we can all be liberated. It requires an immense amount of time, dedication, and commitment. It requires walking the talk 24 hours a day, every day of the year. It is not a hat that you put on while interacting at the center, and then take off. It is a consciousness that embraces the sacredness of our being at all times.

Yoland Trevino is former director of the Vaughn Family Center in Pacoima, California, and a long-time member of Family Support America.

From Trevino, Yoland (1998)"Unleashing Human Capital," in Wise Counsel: Redefining the Role of Consumers, Professionals, and Community Workers in the Helping Process *(Desenlazando el Capital Humano) (Des Moines, Iowa: National Center for Service Integration and the Child and Family Policy Center). Reprinted with permission.*

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La manera en que organizamos las cosas puede llegar a ser una estructura para mantener la dependencia. Los profesionales tienen habilidades y experiencias qué ofrecer, pero también las tienen la gente de la comunidad. Definir los papeles de ambos y utilizar el compañerismo entre ambos es importante. Pero igualmente importante, la contribución de la comunidad necesita ser valorada más llenamente. Debe ser valorada entre los proyectos cooperativos y por los que son responsables de tomar decisiones y de asignar recursos.

Desenlazar el capital humano y reconocer el talento en toda la gente es la única manera en que todos podamos ser liberados. Desenlazar el capital humano requiere una inmensa cantidad de tiempo, dedicación y compromiso. Requiere practicar lo que predicamos veinticuatro horas al día, cada día del año. No es un sombrero que se pone al desenvolverse en el centro y luego se quita. Es un conocimiento que acepta lo sagrado de nuestro ser a todo tiempo.

Yoland Trevino es la directora anterior del Centro Familiar Vaughn en Pacoima, California, y es una miembra de Family Support America.

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Do-It-Yourself Neighborhood Network

A Model Pioneered by a Massachusetts Mom and Her Neighbors

by Eve Sullivan

While children often state their needs in more obvious ways—"feed me … love me … teach me … play with me"—adults have needs, too, and we do a better job of parenting when they're met. Neighborhood networks, once a part of the fabric of our society, meet the needs of both children and parents. That's what we sought to create in 1991, when we founded PARENTS FORUM in Somerville, Massachusetts—a neighborhood organization open and flexible enough for people at all stages of life to both give and get needed support.

We began by getting together as a small group of interested parents and taking an inventory of our needs and skills, starting with the emotional dynamics of family life and how we could strengthen our families. Using our inventory of needs and skills, we addressed the following questions:

- What activities will we organize and when?
- Who will take the lead?
- Who will participate and how will we contact and attract them?
- Who will call or visit prospective hosts?
- Who will seek donations, keep track of expenditures, and thank sponsors?

We started with book and toy exchanges. The exchange of children's books builds family literacy by promoting parents and children reading together. Also, by exchanging their own books and by organizing and carrying out the events, parents pursue their own life-long learning. The exchange is one not just of material goods, but of information and support among parents. Sometimes people need to give in order to make room for what they need to receive.

During the book and toy exchanges, kids decorate plain white shopping bags, delighting in drawing or making simple designs by cutting and pasting paper. This keeps them busy while parents talk together and at the same time demonstrates to parents how simple crafts can provide entertainment for their children.

In time, we've added more activities, which always incorporate five elements—food, affection, learning, fun, and guidance—that families provide to their members. In a healthy parenting relationship, parents are justifiably expected to give more than children in all of these areas—but, as any overburdened parent knows, we cannot give endlessly without replenishing our energies.

From Getting Organized to Organizing

Sue and Rich Silva, parents of a boy and a girl now in primary school, became involved in PARENTS FORUM about four years ago because they wanted to "get better organized at home and stop yelling so much." After participating in a workshop, they became community coordinators. Coordinators act as facilitators, not experts, honoring parents' own leadership in their families. The Silvas led workshops and organized book and toy exchanges on their own.

"I learned," Sue said, "that the most important thing I can give my kids is creativity. I don't need to give them so much stuff!" Sue and another volunteer cleaned out her children's playroom; another helped Sue and Rich with their family budget; and still other parents in the network exchange babysitting with the Silvas. An important aspect of the experience, says Sue, is that it has been fun. She also says it means a lot to her to be able to help others.

Sometimes people need to give in order to make room for what they need to receive.

Like other leaders in the network, the Silvas are volunteers. They weren't community leaders before, but with the help of the PARENTS FORUM handbook and their neighbors, they have developed leadership skills and self-confidence to the point that they now co-chair their school's Parent Teacher Association. On the home front, Sue says, "we're a long way from being perfectly orderly and calm, but we're moving in the right direction."

That direction is one of developing awareness of our emotions and of the balance and imbalances in our lives, an awareness that is essential to maintaining the energy we need to be loving and capable parents. The workshops and activities we designed for PARENTS FORUM help parents develop techniques for effectively managing conflicts that arise day-to-day at work and at home. These, in turn, help us act as positive models for our children as they interact with other children and with adults.

Starting and Supporting Your Network

Here, in brief, is what you need to create and sustain a PARENTS FORUM neighborhood network in your community:

- Activities that respond to families' needs and skills
- People to organize activities and seek community involvement and support: coordinator(s), workshop facilitator(s), treasurer, writer/publicist, secretary, and other volunteers (possibly part of an existing group, such as the PTA or Rotary Club)
- People to participate: parents and others of all ages
- Prizes for participants: goods and gift certificates for items and services useful to families
- Hosts and sponsors: librarians and literacy advocates, educators, public health professionals, business people, service club members, artists, athletes, journalists from all media—some to provide financial support and others to offer in-kind services, donations, or endorsements
- Agencies serving families in need to distribute the goods collected at PARENTS FORUM book and toy exchanges
- A place to meet: library, cultural center, workplace, school, clinic, church, temple, etc.
- Volunteers to provide childcare and direct children's art activities during meetings and events
- Refreshments (remember: "feed me!")
- The PARENTS FORUM handbook, *Where the Heart Listens*, available at www.parentsforum.org

(Neighborhood networks that want to replicate the PARENTS FORUM model and use its name pay a modest fee to help cover outreach.)

Early on, we decided PARENTS FORUM events would be free for neighborhood residents, and we found businesses, schools, and public and private agencies eager to support our activities because of our common interest in supporting healthy family life. PARENTS FORUM has no membership requirement, so there are no financial hurdles for participants and no "in-groups" or "out-group." You do what you can, when you can.

We founded PARENTS FORUM to create a neighborhood organization open and flexible enough for people at all stages of life to both give and get needed support.

In addition to seeking donations, PARENTS FORUM requests fees from agencies that bring in PARENTS FORUM volunteers to conduct activities for their staff or participants. Our activities are a natural choice for schools, clinics, and other agencies seeking parent support activities. Established groups like the PTA and PTO are likely hosts for neighborhood network activities, as are school- or community-based family support centers or work/life programs at companies.

How can we better prepare ourselves to feed, love, teach, play with, and help our children find their way in the world? We must help each other. We need snacks, we need time to meet old friends and make new ones, we need opportunities to learn new things and have some fun, and, last but not least, we need to be involved in our communities.

Eve Sullivan is founder of PARENTS FORUM™, www.parentsforum.org, which welcomes inquiries from those interested in organizing neighborhood networks.

A Give-and-Take Experience

One father described his experience at this PARENTS FORUM book and toy exchange in a public library in Cambridge, Massachusetts: "So many people—everyone is so interested, and everybody needs it, this give-and-take." Another parent, Ceane, the mother of a 2-year-old, "saw the flier in the library and couldn't resist." After picking out a bag full of books, she was still looking. A social worker and therapist attending commented on how valuable such events were to parents: "Parents need this—and regular groups" where they can exchange support. At the end of the free two-hour event, more than a dozen bags of books and toys remained to be given to a family shelter in Boston for people recovering from abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

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Out of Home *Not* Out of Mind

How Family Support Changed Residential Care for Youths at Cobb Center

by Martha Scoville

It's been more than 20 years since Seattle's Cobb Center, one of the oldest residential care program for youths, made a dramatic shift: using the principles of family support practice.

Cobb Center is a program of Children's Home Society of Washington, founded in 1896. The center was set up in a cluster of cottages on the society's campus at a time when youth residential treatment took a strictly medical approach. Youths and their families had different therapists in separate locations, with families off-site. State contracts set the goals of the therapy, and when these were met, children were sent home. Families often fell into crisis upon the child's return.

For years, Cobb Center struggled to be family centered and family focused in this environment. In the early 1980s, as family support gained attention and acceptance, Sharon Osborne—then Children's Home Society of Washington's VP, now its CEO—made a bold move: She negotiated a state contract waiver calling for family involvement in youth residential treatment. The door was open to create environments and conditions that weave families as much as possible into the work with children.

A Visit to Cottage B

Therapist and program supervisor Scott Hanauer, who works in Cobb Center's Cottage B, home to nine boys ranging in age from 6 to 16, calls the cottage a "functional neighborhood." Family members drop by to hang out with staff, help their children with homework, and get support. For many of these boys' parents, this connection to staff is their only source of support, their safety net.

When I visited Cottage B, the boys were in school or participating in after-school activities. Warm brownies, awaiting the boys' return, exuded a welcoming aroma. Adults were chatting in the kitchen—some parents, some staff. At night, I'm told, you find even more parents present, with some family members at the dining table. Staff, youths, and families also go off-site together for camping and rock-climbing—often a first-time experience for these families. When families and center staff know each other and work together, kids get consistent messages about acceptable manners and limits, easing transitions when kids go back home.

Integrating family support into Cobb Center was a response to the isolation and shame that many families with youths in residential treatment used to face. Families had to deal with their children's issues alone, without connection to services in the community. Shame was prevalent, because the only people who really dealt with parents were the ones telling them bad things about their kids.

Cheryl Murfin Bond

One of Cobb Center's cottages.

What Parents Say to Staff

"You taught my son and me how to trust each other enough to take off the boxing gloves. Then, you taught us how to love each other. You lit our lives with hope, which has enabled us to believe in ourselves."

"Having our son in your custody meant safety, guidance, patience, manners, and excellent role models. You did a marvelous job … and we love you for your hard work."

"Our approach was to bring families into the [Cobb Center] community, to help them become less isolated and give them opportunities to feel good about themselves and their children and to do the hard work they need to do to bring their children home," says Susan Maney, residential treatment program manager at the Children's Home Society of Washington.

Staff make sure families get opportunities to experience success together. Seeing the child cook a meal, complete a homework assignment, or engage in successful social interaction "gives the family a sense of hope" and "seals their relationship with staff," says Hanauer.

Working at Cobb Center is different from working at other residential treatment programs. Staff have to be flexible and do a lot of different jobs. But the difference must be a good one: at most programs, staff stay seven to nine months. At Cobb Center, the average is 16 years.

Martha Scoville is director of Family Support Washington, part of the Family Support America States Initiative, which works to strengthen family support agendas in eight states.

Solving the Childcare Conundrum

Chuck Wyrostok

Experts Share Strategies for Family Support Programs, Businesses, and Parents

by Kerigan Steger

When I returned to the workforce, my spouse and I interviewed several types of childcare facilities and caregivers, but didn't feel right about any of them. This dragged on for months. Then, one day, I saw an ad in our church bulletin for in-home care. After meeting the caregiver, we felt the connection that we had been seeking.

All in all, my family's search for acceptable childcare was exhausting, frustrating, and scary—and, unfortunately, typical of many families today. Experts in academia, social services, and business have come up with some key steps for families in finding childcare that meets their needs. They also say family support programs and businesses can—and should—help.

Starting the Search

Childcare options fall into four categories:

- Kith and kin: Provided by family members other than parents or siblings, such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents, as well as friends of the family
- Family childcare providers: Provided for a small number of children in the home of a caregiver who is regulated by the government
- Center-based: Provided for a large group of children in a classroom-like setting by teachers who have training in early childhood
- In-home care: Provided by an individual who comes to the family's home.

To decide which type of childcare and which specific provider are best for them, Kelly Brantman, work-life director at ComPsych, an employee assistance company, recommends families first sit down and list all of their priorities for childcare—such as location, type of setting, amount they can spend, and the times they need care.

Next, employed parents should check with their employers to see if they receive childcare referrals as a job benefit. Brantman also recommends contacting the local state licensing facility and asking for a list of providers in the family's area—as well as asking friends and neighbors if they can recommend a particular caregiver. Word of mouth can be a very helpful source of information.

Family Support Programs' Role

One key role for family support programs is to help families help each other. Programs can help parents exchange recommendations through get-togethers, Internet listservs, and informal networking. Staff should keep their ears open—they can share one family's childcare solutions with others like them.

A more pressing role for family support programs is to support kith-and-kin caregivers. Toni Porter, director of the Institute for a Child Care Continuum at Bank Street College, says there are

Setting Your Sites on Quality Childcare

Here's a Web site to bookmark or add to your list of favorites: The Daily Parent. It's hosted by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and funded by the Citigroup Foundation. Log on at: www.childcareaware.org/en/dailyparent.

5 Steps to Choosing Quality Childcare

1. Look
Begin by visiting several childcare homes or centers. On each visit, think about your first impression. Always visit a home or center more than once.

2. Listen
What does the childcare setting sound like? A place that's too quiet may mean there's not enough activity. A place that's too noisy may indicate a lack of control.

3. Count
A small number of children per adult is most important for babies and younger children.

4. Ask
Ask about the background and experience of all staff and any other adults who will have contact with your child in the home center.

5. Be Informed
Find out more about efforts in your community to improve the quality of childcare.

Source: Child Care Aware

numerous benefits to kith-and-kin care, including flexibility, cost, cultural considerations such as language, and, above all, trust. However, many kith-and-kin providers see themselves as babysitters; therefore, many miss out on both the support and information that parents get from family support programs and the quality control that licensed providers get from government institutions.

Porter believes that the best support for kith-and-kin caregivers could come from local family support programs. These programs can and should provide the caregivers with educational materials, childcare classes, and / or tailored support groups. Some programs provide classes that can be used towards state licensing requirements.

Mon Cochran, executive director of the Early Childhood Program at Cornell University, also believes that family support programs hold the key to reaching kith-and-kin caregivers. In his book, *Finding Our Way, American Early Care and Education in Global Perspective* (forthcoming in 2002), he recommends program staff pay weekly home visits to kith-and-kin caregivers, staying for a few hours and providing educational materials and moral support.

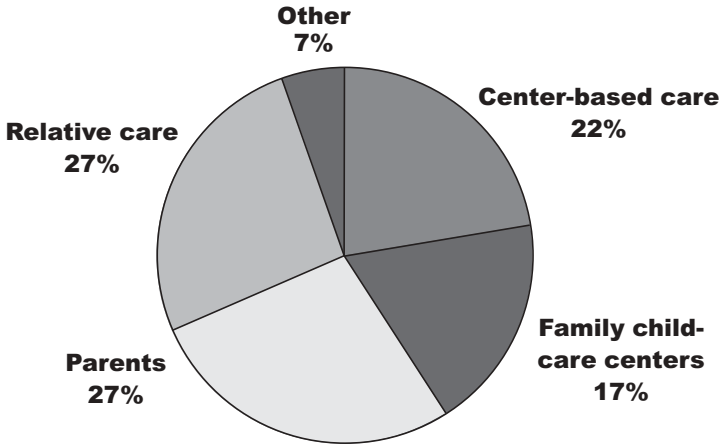
Supporting kith-and-kin providers can be difficult because it can be hard to find these providers and involve them in programs. It's a matter of finding out what providers feel they could use, providing it, and building relationships of trust, equality, and respect—which family support programs do every day. Programs seeking help in supporting kith-and-kin providers can contact Family Support America (www.familysupportamerica.org).

Employers' Role

Some employers pay for either on-site childcare or backup childcare for when employees' regular plans fall through—and with good reason. Employer-sponsored childcare programs can reduce absenteeism and turnover and increase productivity and loyalty. Flexible work options can produce the same effects, making parents better able to combine work and family responsibilities. The following types of alternative work schedules can be extremely beneficial to employees and their families:

- **Flex-time:** A work schedule that permits flexible starting and quitting times, typically requiring a standard number of hours within a given time period

What Kind of Childcare Are Families Using?



Source: Ehrie, J., G. Adams, and T. Tout (2001) *Who's Caring for Our Youngest Children?* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute)

- **Compressed work week:** Full-time work scheduled in fewer than five days a week
- **Part-time:** Less-than-full-time work that includes job security and other rights available to full-time workers
- **Job sharing:** Two people voluntarily sharing the responsibilities of one full-time job, with salary and benefits prorated
- **Flex-place:** Employees working off-site—when they are linked to the workplace electronically, this option is sometimes referred to as telecommuting

Numerous consulting companies help employers assess and meet the childcare needs of their workforce, including Bright Horizons Family Solutions, a member of the Family Support At Work Leadership Roundtable, which provides childcare to Fortune 100 companies. For JPMorgan Chase employees, for example, Bright Horizons manages back-up childcare centers to help when regular childcare plans fall through. Parents returning to work after a birth or adoption can also get eight consecutive weeks of free childcare. This helps parents get through the initial stress of childbirth and adoption and increases the likelihood that they'll come back to work.

Such employer-sponsored childcare supports are getting results: The CPA Group, another Roundtable member, developed and is evaluating a backup childcare program for well children at two different hospitals. Says president Mary Ellen Gornick, "Over the last two years, one of the hospitals has seen a 15-percent reduction in unexpected absences."

Kerigan Steger is pursuing a master's in counseling and organizational psychology at the Adler School of Professional Psychology and is a Family Support At Work intern at Family Support America.

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON

Chuck Wyrostok

A mother and son go over homework at an after-school family support program in Charleston, West Virginia. The state will be a partner in Family Support America's FamilyWise National Family Support Evaluation Project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Evaluation: Telling the Family Support Story

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Several years ago, in their influential book *Evaluating Family Programs*, Heather Weiss and Francine Jacobs addressed the age-old question: Is the cup half-empty or half-full? In this case, the "cup" was the evaluation of family support and education programs, and Weiss and Jacobs concluded that it was both half-empty and half-full: several longitudinal studies demonstrated the benefits of early childhood programs, but there were few evaluations of other family-serving programs.

To begin to address these issues, Family Support America has created tools that family support providers across the country are using to assess the degree to which their programs are operating according to the principles of family support practice. Yet this is only the first step in developing a comprehensive evaluation framework for the field. To evaluate how well the family support approach *works*—how well it benefits families in relation to other methods of assistance or no assistance at all—the field must find ways to effectively measure the outcomes of family support activities. This special focus section highlights Family Support America's intensive, multi-year initiative to lead the national effort to do just that.

Math versus Storytelling

When most people think of evaluation, they think of questionnaires, numbers, and statistics. However, evaluation is more about storytelling than about math. To conduct a successful evaluation, a program asks good questions, finds ways to answer these questions, and then uses the information to "tell its story," perhaps to solicit funds for program improvement or to show that the program is worthwhile. Programs can use numbers (quantitative information) to tell their stories, but they can also use words and experiences (qualitative information). In the best cases, evaluators blend quantitative and qualitative information into a well-rounded description of what is happening as the result of the program. This is no easy task. Telling a good story requires knowledge, skills, resources, commitment, and tools.

On top of this complexity, evaluation is a high-stakes game for many programs, which rely on it to demonstrate their effectiveness. Political agendas and tight budgets contribute to the pressure—with money scarce and programs in competition, funders look for ways to understand which programs provide the most bang for the buck. In such an environment, evaluation becomes a complex task of balancing stakeholders' competing interests.

Evaluation in the family support field faces the additional challenge of living up to the principles of family support practice. Family support program evaluations not only need to be accurate and meaningful, they also need to be done in ways that honor these principles. They must address traditional evaluation concerns as well as such issues as ensuring a representative balance of participants in the evaluation, not detracting from program delivery while collecting data, and respecting the cultural values of participating families.

This special focus section highlights the input of thought leaders at a national meeting in October 2001 to discuss an evaluation framework for the family support field. In addition to senior staff of the convening organizations, Family Support America and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the following leaders attended:

Andrea Anderson, Ph.D., The Aspen Institute; Charles Bruner, Ph.D., Child & Family Policy Center; Richard Catalano, University of Washington; Judith K. Chynoweth, Foundation Consortium; Jessie Coleman, The Family Connection; Joy Dryfoos, Independent Researcher and Community Schools Specialist; Carl J. Dunst, Ph.D., Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute; Peter Gabor, Ph.D., University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work; Stacie G. Goffin, Ed.D., National Association for the Education of Young Children; Jennifer Greene, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana; Elaine Harris-Fulton, Wilkinsburg Family Support Center; Steven Heasley, West Virginia Governor's Cabinet on Children & Families; Robin Higa, Thurston County Community Network; Alla Ivask, Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs; Francine H. Jacobs, Ed.D., Tufts University; M. Rebecca Kilburn, Ph.D., RAND; Jane Knitzer, Ed.D., National Center for Children in Poverty; Debra Lewis-Curlee, Collaborative for Organizing Mt. Pleasant; Janice MacAulay, Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs; Edward W. Maibach, M.P.H., Ph.D., Porter Novelli; Judith Martinez, Colorado Foundation for Families and Children; Lynn McDonald, MSW, Ph.D., Wisconsin Center For Educational Research; Carol Mehesy, Colorado Foundation for Families and Children; William C. Nye, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania; David L. Olds, Ph.D., Kempe Children's Center, University of Colorado; Adriana M. Pecina, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation; Laura Porter, Family Policy Council; Amy G. Rassen, LCSW, Jewish Family and Children's Services; Kenneth Seeley, Ph.D., Colorado Foundation for Families & Children; Jesus Ruben Segura, Mayor of Sunland Park; Yoland Trevino, Transformative Collaborations International; Jack Tweedie, National Conference of State Legislators; Bernice Weissbourd, M.A., Family Focus; Ruth A. Wooden, Porter Novelli; Sylvia Meiling Yee, Ph.D., Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund; Ruth E. Zambrana, Ph.D., University of Maryland

The Challenges of Family Support Evaluation

Finding ways to accurately evaluate family support programs and approaches is one of the most important challenges facing the field today. Funders, policymakers, legislators, and the general public are asking for more proof than ever in their quest to identify positive programs and spend money in effective ways. Yet evaluating family support programs remains as difficult as ever. The challenges evaluators face include:

- The fluid nature of family support services, which are continually responsive to families' needs and thus difficult to pinpoint and evaluate
- The individualized nature of family support services, which makes comparisons across individuals and programs difficult
- The difficulty of measuring specific outcomes and isolating program effects in a complex social world
- The difficulty of measuring the effects of prevention and promotion of strengths
- The amount of time programs need to develop before they are likely to show results
- The lack of time and money devoted to evaluation—especially at the program and community levels, where resources are scarce and service delivery is the priority
- The specialized skills need to perform evaluations, which local program administrators and staff may not possess
- The lack of support for evaluations at the local level—many program planners and participants do not find evaluations, as currently conducted, useful to their efforts to support families
- The failure of current evaluation methods to convince a broad audience—including the general public, legislators, and policymakers—of the power of family support

Why Current Evaluation Methods Aren't Working

There is a strong and growing sense in the field of family support that traditional evaluation methodologies have not successfully captured the impact of family support programs on participating families. This frustration is by no means new; it dates, in fact, back to some of the earliest work in evaluating community-based initiatives. More than a decade ago, Douglas Powell argued in *America's Family Support Programs: The Origins and Development of a Movement* that "using conventional research practices with community-based family support programs is akin to putting a square peg in a round hole.…Research designs and procedures for controlled laboratory settings will not work in the fluid world of a family support program."

Despite Powell's warnings, the great majority of decision makers still rely on the results of evaluation and research methodologies they consider scientific, objective, and rigorous—in part due to the widespread belief that quantitative methods are inherently superior to qualitative methods. And in a climate of perceived government waste and increasing focus on accountability and results, family support programs are under intense pressure to demonstrate their utility to society.

To do so, evaluators in the family support arena must develop innovative, flexible ways to assess the impacts of family support programs and systems. This is no small task. Such family-supportive evaluation methods must work for all the people they are meant to serve—including program participants, staff, and policymakers.

In response to these needs, Family Support America has begun formulating an evaluation framework that will enable the family support field to more accurately evaluate and replicate the effects of family support programs and activities.

Where We're Going: A Common Plan

In 1997, Family Support America, the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice, and the Child and Family Policy Center convened a national dialogue on the evaluation of family support and family-centered practice. The groundbreaking meeting laid the groundwork for future efforts to connect family support programs and practices with child and family well-being. The evaluators, policymakers, and program practitioners in attendance recommended that the field:

- Agree on what is already known about the effectiveness of family support programs
- Identify common outcomes that family support programs should strive for, including intermediate outcomes and indicators

Findings Hint at Wealth of Outcomes

While traditional evaluation techniques continue to present challenges to capturing the full impact of family support, some have hinted at the wealth of positive outcomes associated with high-quality programs.

In a 1998 article published in *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, for example, Comer and Fraser reviewed six family support program evaluations and concluded that "family-support programs that attempt to control, ameliorate, and eradicate risk factors associated with socioeconomic, educational, and other disadvantages can be effective in strengthening families and increasing the well-being of children." The evaluations showed that the programs had contributed to a variety of positive outcomes, including gains in child development, language development, educational attainment, school achievement, supportive home environments, parent-child interaction, health outcomes, and adult development. Although sample sizes for the evaluations were small, Comer and Fraser found them to be convincing arguments "that well-conceptualized and implemented family-support services have the capacity to improve family functioning."

Arnold Reynolds's recent evaluation of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, also emphasized the key role of family support in effective early childhood intervention (see *AFSM*, vol. 20, no. 2). His long-term study of the centers found that:

- Participating children had higher graduation rates and more years of completed education
- Participating children had lower drop-out rates and lower rates of juvenile arrest and violent crime arrests
- Participating children were retained in their grade less often and used special education services less frequently
- Effects were stronger for boys and for children who had participated for more years of the program

In an interview for *America's Family Support Magazine*, Reynolds explicitly tied these positive findings to the family support components of the program: "I believe a main reason we find a crime reduction effect is because of the family support component. If it were just an educational program, you wouldn't find the social outcomes that we've found. We have evidence that the family support component is partly responsible for the delinquency reduction effect" (vol. 20, no. 2).

- Compile a list of existing models of evaluation
- Make a list of indicators of child and family well-being and ask programs to add to or subtract from the list based on their experiences
- Develop a common language between practitioners and evaluators
- Revise evaluation methods to be more applicable to family support by:
  1. Creating a true partnership among evaluators, practitioners, and families
  2. Developing flexible evaluation methods
  3. Providing ongoing evaluation that is part of a program's developmental process
  4. Developing long-term relationships between programs and evaluators
  5. Building the capacity of others to evaluate
  6. Ensuring that evaluations are accountable to programs and families
- Help states as they begin to mandate evaluation by promoting methods that focus on internal program improvement and design and that include interactive evaluation and self-evaluation
- Create a technical assistance bank of evaluators, tools, and methods available to local programs
- Spread the capacity to perform evaluations throughout communities

This ambitious set of recommendations continues to guide Family Support America's ongoing work on evaluation issues. It highlights many of the important challenges facing the field.

What We've Developed: Resources for the Field

Over the past several years, Family Support America has developed a variety of evaluation resources for the family support field.

Family Support Evaluation Principles

Evaluation of family support efforts should draw from the principles of family support practice as described below.

While few evaluations may be able to follow all of these recommendations, it is important for programs to continue to ask: Are we performing this evaluation in a family-supportive way?

1. **Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.**
   - The evaluation is participatory—families, staff, and other stakeholders engage in all stages of the process.
   - The evaluation team works to make the evaluation understandable and accessible to all stakeholders and to the general public.
   - Consumer satisfaction measures represent key components of the evaluation.

2. **Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members—adults, youth, and children.**
   - The evaluation represents a learning opportunity and supports the development of the program and the families within it.

3. **Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.**
   - The evaluation includes a focus on family, program, and community strengths.
   - The outcomes framework utilizes promotional indicators, which reflect the prevention- and strengths-oriented approaches of family support (see sidebar, page 33).

4. **Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.**
   - The evaluation is consistent with the values of the cultural and ethnic groups in the program.
   - Practitioners conduct the evaluation in the primary language of participating families.
   - The evaluation team represents the program participants and works to overcome possible cultural barriers.

5. **Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.**
   - The evaluation team includes community members as much as possible.
   - Evaluation results are shared with the community.
   - The evaluation includes a focus on community-level factors and recognizes the need to place program evaluation within a community context.
   - Evaluation strategies emphasize the community-level effects of collaborative efforts.

Mapping and Defining the Field of Family Support

In 2000, Family Support America began creating a database of comprehensive information on family support programs across the country (on-line at www.familysupportamerica.org). The National Family Support Mapping Project arose in response to some simple but important questions:

- How many family support programs are there?
- What families are they serving?
- What services and programs do they offer?
- What are their funding sources?

Foundations, public policymakers, state government agencies, parents, and community leaders were asking these questions, but no one had the answers.

In addition to beginning to answer these questions, the project has also raised a new one—what defines a family support program? While early efforts to define the field focused on freestanding programs, the mapping project made clear that family support is being practiced in a wide range of settings. Based on this new information, Family Support America has developed a family support typology that describes six basic models of family support:

1. **Stand-alone family support centers:** Freestanding centers, typically known as family support or family resource centers

2. **Family support programs nested within larger organizations:** Programs that are part of larger organizations (such as school-based family support programs and programs located in Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries, and health care settings)

3. **Other organizations that adopt and work from the principles of family support practice:** Family support values and principles expressed in a variety of settings where a concrete family support program or center is not present (such as in child welfare agencies, in businesses, and in other settings)

4. **Community-level systems of family support:** Networks of multiple family support sites that represent a partnership between agencies and organizations to create a community-wide system of family support delivery

5. **Comprehensive community collaborative structures:** Help plan and organize human services at the community level, as part of states' movements to grant more decision-making powers to localities and communities

6. **Family support at the workplace:** Employer-sponsored family support programs for employees and/or workplace initiatives that build on the strengths of families and communities

A Canadian Perspective on Evaluation

Across the border, an ongoing evaluation initiative being conducted by the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (CAFRP) has found that Canadian family support programs:

- Value evaluation, especially for providing ongoing feedback, informing program development, and providing the basis for accountability
- Generally report feeling "over-evaluated," often participating in more than one evaluation per funding year
- Generally feel that evaluation, as currently practiced, has very little utility for them
- Have identified what they consider inaccurate representations of their program in evaluation reports
- Have few resources for conducting evaluations on their own

To help make the process a more accurate and participatory one, CAFRP recommends that evaluation efforts in Canada focus on obtaining feedback for program improvements, proving that programs work, and building the knowledge base for family support approaches.

Building on its conversations with the field, CAFRP hopes to help build the country's evaluation capacity by:

- Continuing work on developing evaluation models and approaches
- Developing evaluation tools (such as data collection instruments)
- Developing a research agenda that emphasizes the ways in which the goals of improving programs, proving program effectiveness, and building knowledge can complement each other
- Supporting field-level evaluation efforts
- Helping to train all stakeholder groups in evaluation methods and approaches
- Facilitating ongoing communications between practitioners, funders, and evaluators

Adapted from Gabor, Peter (2001) Building Evaluation Capacity in the Family Resource Program Field, *presented at the Family Support America Thought Leaders Meeting (Princeton, N.J.).*

- The evaluation serves as a stimulus to a more community-centered and collaborative approach to working with families.

6. **Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.**
   - Families take ownership of the evaluation and use it as a tool for program and community improvement.
   - Families take a leadership role in the evaluation and represent the primary stakeholders in the process.
   - Programs advocate for more responsive and useful evaluation approaches and funders and decision makers incorporate this feedback into their work.

7. **Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.**
   - The evaluation addresses both formal and informal supports that may influence families.

8. **Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.**
   - The evaluation is part of a developmental process, and practitioners conduct it in accordance with the developmental stage of the program.
   - Practitioners use multiple methods to more fully capture what takes place in a program or initiative.
   - The evaluation is tailored to the needs of the program and community; specific methodologies and tools are matched to the needs and goals of the program.
   - Practitioners use evaluation results for continuous improvement and strategic planning.

9. **Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.**
   - Practitioners conduct the evaluation according to the principles of family support practice.
   - The evaluation requires programs and communities to articulate a vision for change.
   - Practitioners integrate the evaluation into program planning.
   - The evaluation is useful, not burdensome, and evaluators communicate information in a timely fashion.

Promotional Indicators

Promotion as a strategy of family support delivery was intoduced by Carl Dunst and Carol Trivette, who wrote that one of the defining characteristics of family support is a focus on promoting strengths and capacities. To ensure that evaluation of family support efforts is consistent with this goal, Family Support America has been working with eight states to develop

"promotional indicators" of family support. Promotional indicators measure the increased capacity of children, youth, families, and communities to successfully address challenges—rather than focusing on their deficits.

See below for a list of recommended promotional indicators for the family support field.

Many promotional indicators tend to be steps on the way to achieving longer-term outcomes. They highlight the importance of measuring and understanding intermediate markers of development, encouraging program planners to think about the ways in which their activities lead to increased strengths—and creating windows of opportunity to modify program strategies when necessary to reach the final outcomes they desire.

Family Support America has supported the use of promotional indicators at two levels—measuring child and family well-being at the state and community level, through asset-based "report cards," and evaluating the effects of specific programs and initiatives on participating families.

Other Evaluation Tools

Family Support America offers programs and communities the following tools for assessing their own and their community's strengths and needs:

- *Know Your Community: A Step-by-Step Guide to Community Needs and Resources Assessment* (1998, 2nd ed.): This manual helps programs discover important information about their communities, including data pertinent to family support evaluation. It includes sample surveys, data-collection worksheets, and progress charts that can be customized with the companion diskette.
- *How Are We Doing? A Program Self-Assessment Toolkit for the Family Support Field* (1998): This guidebook and interactive software database give family support programs a process for measuring their success and making plans for improvement. The kit provides specific benchmarks to help programs enact the principles of family support practice and provides detailed checklists for working with a community team to systematically assess program performance in 10 areas—governance, outreach/engaging families, programs and activities, parent education and child development, working one-on-one with families, relationships with the community, center environment, home visiting, staff roles and capabilities, and monitoring and evaluation.
- *Family Support Centers: A Program Manager's Toolkit* (2000): The evaluation chapter in this three-volume reference set focuses on such issues as elements of successful evaluations, tips for data collection, and how to use theories of change to describe program goals and develop strategies for achieving them.

Promotional Indicators of Family Support

Outcomes	Promotional Indicators
Children ready for school	• Percent of children entering kindergarten demonstrating appropriate progress in several areas (physical-motor, cognitive, language, social and emotional development)
Children succeeding in school	• Percent of parents actively engaged in their children's learning and education
Safe and stable families	• Percent of adults who have someone to rely on (a support network)
Safe, supportive, and engaged communities	• Percent of individuals volunteering in their community
Youth engaging in positive behavior	• Percent of children who have frequent involvement with and receive emotional support from both parents • Percent of youth reporting a meaningful relationship with an adult • Percent of youth involved in sports, clubs, or organizations at school or in the community three or more hours a week • Percent of youth whose families set clear expectations, rules, and consequences
Healthy families	• Percent of children fully immunized by age two • Percent of pregnant women receiving pre-natal care in their first trimester • Percent of children and families covered by health insurance

In addition, Family Support America has also been working with communities to develop local report cards that show how the community's health, school preparedness and achievement, and economic well-being outcomes stack up. This work may result in a published guide to using community report cards in the future.

Where We Are Now: Developing a Framework

Last October, Family Support America and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation convened a thought leaders meeting on developing an evaluation framework for the field of family support. More than 30 leading thinkers from across the country—including evaluators, researchers, family support practitioners, community and parent leaders, foundation representatives, and Family Support America staff and board members—came together at the meeting to define the challenges facing the field and consider how these challenges might be overcome to develop a comprehensive family support evaluation initiative.

Using Theories of Change

Theory-based evaluation is one way for programs to be clear about their impact. Developing a "theory of change"—a theory about the role of programs in the changes measured in participants' lives—requires evaluators to clarify *what* the program in question does and *how* it does it.

In the time allowed by the thought leaders meeting, participants developed practical theories of change for five of the six models of family support (see "Mapping and Defining the Field of Family Support" on page 31 and "What's Your Theory of Change?" on page 36). When future groups come together to construct comprehensive theories of change for all six models, the framework will serve as the foundation for both family support program planning and evaluation.

Points of Agreement

Participants repeatedly voiced the following convictions at the thought leaders meeting, pointing to a great degree of convergence within the field regarding the future of family support evaluation. They agreed that:

1. **The inclusion of families and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of an evaluation framework is crucial.**
   - An inclusive and participatory approach is needed to create buy-in and ownership of evaluation activities at the program level.

A New How-To Guide for Measuring Outcomes

Published in 2001 by the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community Based Family Resource and Support programs, *Outcome Accountability for Family Support Programs* offers in-depth guidance on how to identify, measure, and report on family support program outcomes. The set includes:

Volume I

- An in-depth reference manual on outcome accountability

Volume II

- An introduction to the concept of outcome accountability
- A glossary of key terms
- Worksheets for identifying desired outcomes and developing an evaluation plan
- Forms for collecting demographic, service, and customer satisfaction data
- Outcome measurement surveys and questionnaires
- Instructions for constructing scales
- Instructions for collecting and analyzing outcome data
- Instructions for writing an outcome report for funders
- Instructions for using outcome data to make program improvements
- Resources for more information on outcome accountability

The outcome evaluation model used in the guides allows programs to document progress on short- and intermediate-term outcomes—outcomes that may contribute to improvements in long-term outcomes for families. While programs' ability to demonstrate these outcomes does not replace the need for the more rigorous evaluation research, it will help them prepare to participate in such projects.

To order a copy of *Outcome Accountability for Family Support Programs*, send a check or purchase order for $25 plus $6 postage and handling to:

Tom Cabarga
Chapel Hill Training-Outreach Project
800 Eastowne Drive, Suite 105
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

- From the beginning of an evaluation effort, programs should seek input from all stakeholders, including families, program staff, community members, key decision-makers, and funders.
- Programs should set standards for participation in the evaluation process.
- Programs must recognize the tension between efficiency in gathering information and the full participation of a variety of stakeholders.

2. **Current evaluation methods are not adequate—there is a need to broaden the methods and tools used to evaluate family support initiatives.**
   - Evaluators should consider implementing an organic evaluation process in cooperation with data collection.
   - Evaluators should include cost-benefit analyses in evaluation activities.
   - The field should embrace flexible evaluation methods that will "tell the story" of family support programs.

3. **Evaluation must be culturally relevant and evaluators must be culturally competent.**
   - Evaluation processes and indicators must reflect diverse cultures and must be culturally appropriate.
   - The cultures represented by participating families should shape what the evaluation measures as well as the ways in which the evaluation is conducted.
   - Evaluation must tap indigenous community wisdom.
   - Culturally competent practices should emerge through a participatory process of gathering information.

Evaluation Challenges and Solutions

The thought leaders group also identified and prioritized major evaluation challenges, and developed recommendations for the following challenges:

1. **Evaluations must measure a messy process in a participatory way.** Family support programs are notoriously complex and evolving. To accurately reflect this reality, evaluators should:
   - Develop a flexible set of indicators of success
   - Interview families and communities so they can inform the process
   - Build program and community capacity for engaging in evaluation activities
   - Convene funders to discuss evaluation approaches and common outcomes
   - Develop and utilize qualitative evaluation methods that capture the stories of families and programs and how they achieve progress and success
   - Start small, learn from the process, and then develop new tools and models

Data Management Made Easy

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, in partnership with Allegheny County Family Centers, has developed the Family Support Management Information System (FS/MIS) to help family support centers collect and analyze program and outcome information for their evaluation efforts. All 30 family support centers in Pittsburgh and surrounding Allegheny County currently use the system.

FS/MIS monitors families' participation in center activities and documents their progress toward self-selected goals and outcomes. More than 25 standardized reports compile such data as:

- Demographic information for all center participants, including dates of birth, educational and employment status, health care data, and household income
- Referral source information and participants' interests in programs
- Pregnancy and birth outcome information
- Developmental assessments for children
- Information on children in placement outside of the home
- Data on participant involvement in center activities
- Records of staff/family interactions and services provided

To learn more about FS/MIS, contact Debra Lee Stark at the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, 412/624-4553, dlstark@pi.

2. **Evaluations must measure the adherence to family support principles.** To measure the extent to which family support principles are being enacted in programs, evaluators should:
   - Consider the program's purpose, context, culture, and community factors
   - Acknowledge program variation and focus on the family support principles that apply in specific situations
   - Develop ways to measure the connectedness between parents and staff in the program
   - Clarify the outcomes of interest
   - Follow evaluation methods that integrate the various domains of family support

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What's Your Theory of Change?

A large part of evaluating a program is understanding what it is trying to accomplish. Here's how to use the "theory of change" model to do that. Once you complete this process, evaluation is largely a matter of collecting the data. Using your theory of change means your data will be relevant and useful to your evaluation.

The Theory of Change Process	Sample Answers	Your Answers
Step 1: Choose one of the following five models of family support: 1. Stand-alone family support centers 2. Family support programs nested within larger organizations 3. Other organizations that adopt and work from the principles of family support practice 4. Community-level systems of family support 5. Comprehensive community collaborative structures 6. Family support at the workplace	Model 1: Stand-alone family support centers	
Step 2: Choose one of the following major outcomes: 1. Healthy births 2. Physically and emotionally healthy children, adolescents, and adults 3. Children ready for school 4. Children succeeding in school 5. Youth engaging in positive behavior 6. Safe and stable families 7. Families with adequate income 8. Safe, supportive, and engaged communities	Safe and stable families	
Step 3: Identify 6 to 10 key conditions or elements that must be in place to achieve this outcome.	• Families are engaged • Resources are predictable and adequate • Relationships are based in respect • The environment is welcoming • There are enough qualified staff • Families are motivated to participate • Program strategies are effective • Families define their own outcomes • Families—not programs—are the focus of the work	

The Theory of Change Process	Sample Answers	Your Answers
Step 4: Select one of the key conditions or elements generated in Step 3 and further identify the additional elements or conditions that lead to it.	**Families are engaged:** • Outreach is individualized • There are opportunities for reciprocity • Families experience a sense of community • Parents are involved in program design, implementation, and governance • Program staff "walk the talk" • Both parents and staff benefit from the same training and supports (facilitation, evaluation, grant writing, parenting, etc.)	
Step 5: Brainstorm key activities and strategies necessary for achieving these elements or conditions and that ultimately contribute to the achievement of the long-term outcome.	• Develop strategic points of engagement—births, moving, marriage • Be proactive—pre-marital counseling, financial literacy • Offer a variety of participant-defined activities • Develop creative, persistent outreach • Form consistency in relationships—address staff turnover and establish mutual aid peer support networks	
Step 6: Explain your theory by showing how the activities/strategies and elements/conditions lead to the achievement of the outcome.	Family engagement is a major pathway for safe and stable families. The necessary conditions for achieving family engagement are individualized outreach; opportunities for reciprocity; a sense of community; parent involvement in program design, implementation, and governance; and stable, skilled staff. To achieve these conditions, we must create programs that tie into life events; offer participant-driven activities that are scheduled at convenient times; engage parents in designing programs, evaluation, and operations/ governance; and provide training and support services that benefit both parents and staff.	

Evaluation continued from page 35

3. **Programs need to find effective ways to communicate evaluation results.** To effectively communicate evaluation information to the relevant audiences, evaluators should:
   - Focus on "telling the story" of the families and programs—through results mapping, for example, and other ethnographic and qualitative techniques
   - Translate the jargon of evaluation into a common language that can be presented with examples
   - Develop communication tools such as team presentations and fact sheets
   - Work to remove the threat that programs feel from evaluation
   - Build relationships, focusing on trust, respect, and access to information
   - Engage stakeholders from the beginning of the process
   - Set standards for participation and parent engagement

Next Steps: The FamilyWise National Family Support Evaluation Project

To continue its work toward improving evaluation practice in the family support field, Family Support America recently received a planning grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for its new FamilyWise National Family Support Evaluation Project. The project is organized around the following focus areas.

Mapping and Tracking Family Support

Funders and policymakers need a core amount of information about the six models of family support before they can understand and respond to the needs of the field. To develop this information base, which will be the foundation for future evaluation activities, Family Support America is mapping and tracking all five types of family support programs through its National Family Support Mapping Project.

Analyzing and Reviewing the Literature

Reviewing the social science research relevant to family support outcomes and strategies is a crucial step in understanding how best to form a family support evaluation framework. Family Support America will analyze this body of this information, synthesize its findings, and present it in an easy-to-follow format to family support practitioners and policymakers. The findings from this review will inform the FamilyWise Project's evaluation framework, described below.

Developing a Flexible Evaluation Framework

Family Support America will soon begin working with programs and communities to develop a framework of relevant outcomes and indicators of family support that programs and initiatives can use in their evaluation efforts. The framework, based on theories of change that explain how programs influence families' well-being, will serve as a flexible menu of options from which programs can select outcomes and indicators relevant to their goals—adding or changing outcomes and indicators as they see fit. In keeping with the principles of family support practice, it will emphasize promotional indicators that tap into families' strengths.

Recommending Evaluation Methodologies

In addition to developing a framework of outcomes and indicators, the project will seek answers to the questions: Which evaluation methodologies will help the field conduct more useful evaluations? Which will help programs gather and provide information to policymakers and decision makers?

Appropriate methodologies should revolve around family support theories of change, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods and allowing programs to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders.

Accrediting Quality Programs

Quality practice is a major focus of the FamilyWise project—one of the major results of dependable evaluation findings will be their contribution to our understanding of the ways family support should operate and program staff and families should interact. As part of this focus on quality practice, Family Support America will explore the merits of:

- Family support program certification—a program self-assessment and planning process currently available to interested programs
- Family support program accreditation—an intensive program assessment and evaluation process to ensure quality practice in the field

The Future of Family Support Evaluation

Each of the evaluation efforts described in this special focus section has focused on a singular goal: enabling the family support field to more accurately tell the story of family support.

Because of these activities, and the determination and perseverance of family support practitioners and advocates nationwide, the cup of family support evaluation may soon be filled with family-supportive evaluation methods that work for everyone—program participants, staff, policymakers, and the communities in which they are based.

—David Diehl, Ph.D.

Help Us Help You Evaluate Your Program!

Family Support America needs your input to help make our FamilyWise evaluation project a success! Please complete the following survey and send your comments to:

Family Support America
Attn: AFSM FamilyWise Survey
20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste. 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
Fax: 312/338-1522

1. Are you aware of family support programs or initiatives that have conducted good evaluations? If so, list the program names and contact information:

_____

_____

_____

2. What kinds of evaluation supports, tools, or resources would be most useful to you?

_____

_____

_____

3. In the area of family support evaluation, what are the most important issues or challenges you think need to be addressed?

_____

_____

_____

4. What currently available evaluation resources (such as manuals, research articles, toolkits, and Web sites) do you find most useful? Which of these would you recommend to others?

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you have general comments or other suggestions for our work on evaluation?

_____

_____

_____

Resource File

Organizations

The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives

281 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10010
212/677-5510
www.aspenroundtable.org

A forum in which foundation sponsors, directors, technical assistance providers, evaluators, and public sector officials meet to discuss lessons learned by initiatives across the country. Includes a focus on community-based research and evaluation, including theories of change approaches.

Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs

707– 331 Cooper Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5
613/237-7667
www.frp.ca

A national organization representing more than 2,000 family support programs and services across Canada. Promotes the well-being of families through national leadership, consultation, and resources for family support professionals and advocates. Is engaged in an initiative exploring evaluation issues in the Canadian context.

Center for Assessment and Policy Development

111 Presidential Boulevard, Suite 234
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
610/664-4540
www.capd.org

Helps institutions, communities, and public systems improve outcomes for children, adolescents, and families. Works on a variety of issues, including improving the health, positive development, and early school success of young children; family support and empowerment; education; adolescent parenting; violence prevention; community change; reduction in racism; leadership; and civic engagement. Employs evaluation as a tool for understanding social issues.

Harvard Family Research Project

Harvard Graduate School of Education
Longfellow Hall
Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138
617/495-9108
www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp

Strives to increase the effectiveness of public and private organizations and communities as they promote child development, student achievement, healthy family functioning, and community development. Fosters a sustainable learning process that relies on the collection, analysis, synthesis, and application of information to guide problem-solving and decision-making. Works on research and evaluation, outcomes-based accountability, early childhood, after-school issues, and family-school connections, and publishes a newsletter, *The Evaluation Exchange.*

Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute

18A Regent Park Boulevard
Asheville, NC 28806
828/255-0470
www.puckett.org

Engages in activities that enhance and promote healthy child, parent, and family functioning. Fosters the adoption of evidence-based practices that build on the capacities and strengths of children, parents, and families; communities; and public and private organizations.

Search Institute

The Banks Building
615 First Avenue NE, Suite 125
Minneapolis, MN 55413
www.search-institute.org

Has developed a framework of 40 developmental assets for youth that emphasize the positive experiences, relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities crucial to positive development. Recently expanded its asset framework to include infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary-age children.

Publications

Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment & Accountability

edited by David Fetterman, Shakeh Kaftarian, & Abraham Wandersman
1996, 411 pp.

Provides a variety of perspectives on empowerment and participatory evaluation and the ways in which evaluation can serve to foster improvement and self-determination.

Family Support America
312/338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

Evaluating Family Programs

by Heather Weiss and Francine Jacobs
1988, 556 pp.

Describes family support and education programs, summarizes what is known about their effectiveness, and provides strategies and tools for program developers and evaluators. Presents a broad framework for evaluation applicable to both small community programs and large research and demonstration programs.

Family Support America
312/338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

Evaluating School-linked Services: Considerations and Best Practices

by Karen Horsch
1998, 31 pp.

Nine evaluators of school-linked services programs identify considerations and best practices related to evaluating outcomes, sustainability, and collaboration to help determine how school-linked services programs work, what their impact is, and whether they should be expanded.

Harvard Family Research Project
617/496-4304
www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp

Evaluation Exchange

A free newsletter published quarterly by the Harvard Family Research Project that highlights innovative evaluation methods and approaches, emerging trends in evaluation practice, and practical applications of evaluation theory. The current issue's topic is evaluation and family support.

Harvard Family Research Project
617/495-9108
www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval.htm

Family Resource Centers: Vehicles for Change

by the California Family Resource Center Learning Circle
2000, 36 pp.

Defines the key characteristics and activities of quality family support centers, describes how they function as a vehicle for change for families and communities, and helps policymakers and funders make the case for family support centers.

California Office of Child Abuse Prevention
916/445-2771

Family Support Evaluation

FRCA Report, Vol. 16, No. 4

Presents evaluation strategies at state and local levels, as well as a resource file of evaluation publications.

Family Support America
312/338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

Finding Our Way: A Participatory Evaluation Method for Family Resource Programs

by D. Ellis.
1998, 200 pp.

Guides programs though a participatory evaluation method. Includes extensive background information, quotations from program practitioners, a glossary, examples, sample tools, and a comprehensive annotated bibliography.

Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs
613/237-8515
www.frp.ca

How Are We Doing? A Program Self-Assessment Toolkit for the Family Support Field

by Nilofer Ahsan & Lina Cramer
1998, 150 pp. plus software

Provides detailed checklists so programs can work with a community team to systematically assess their performance.

Family Support America
312/338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

Making a Difference: Moving to Outcome-Based Accountability for Comprehensive Service Reforms

by Nancy Young, Sid Gardner, Soraya Coley, Lisbeth Schor, and Charles Bruner
1994, 40 pp.

This National Center for Service Integration resource brief provides several different frameworks to stimulate state and community approaches to moving toward outcome-based accountability.

Family Support America
312/338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

Making it Count: Evaluating Family Preservation Services

by Francine Jacobs and Jennifer Kapuscik
2000, 390 pp.

Explains how to conduct feasible, affordable, and ongoing evaluations of programs at the state or local level using the five-tiered approach developed by Francine Jacobs and Heather Weiss.

Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development, Tufts University
617/627-5327

New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives, Volume 1: Concepts, Methods and Contexts

edited by James Connell, Anne Kubisch, Lisbeth Schorr, and Carol Weiss
1995, 225 pp.

Provides a broad overview of the issues and challenges facing comprehensive community issues. Includes chapters on theory-based evaluation, using community-wide indicators in an evaluation, and the role of evaluators.

Aspen Institute
212/677-5510
www.aspenroundtable.org

New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives, Volume 2: Theory, Measurement, and Analysis

edited by Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Anne Kubisch, and James Connell
1998, 256 pp.

Builds on the first volume and focuses more extensively on the theory of change approach to evaluation and measurement issues in evaluation.

Aspen Institute
212/677-5510
www.aspenroundtable.org

Promotional Indicators: Proceedings from a Meeting on Family Support Evaluation

by Family Support America
2000, 97 pp.

Includes a summary of Family Support America's 2000 symposium on family support evaluation, next steps for the field, and selected speaker notes and background papers.

Family Support America
312/338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

W.K. Kellogg Evaluation Manual

by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation
1998, 110 pp.

Written primarily for program and project directors and staff, this free manual provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a useful tool for programs. (Ask for item #1203)

Collateral Management Company
616/964-0700

Internet Resources

American Evaluation Association

www.eval.org

Features information on collaborative, participatory, and empowerment evaluation; evaluation use; health evaluation; human services evaluation; and minority issues in evaluation.

Child Trends

www.childtrends.org

Provides information on research and data, including indicator formation for children, youth, and families, and a focus on positive indicators. *Child Indicator* newsletter and *Research Briefs* are also available on the site.

Fiscal Policy Studies Institute: Results and Performance Accountability

www.resultsaccountability.com

Contains a wealth of information on results-based accountability, financing, and related issues.

Kids Count

www.aecf.org/kidscount

A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. provides policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being.

Matrix Outcomes Model

iccs.csumb.edu/html/community/matrix

Provides a set of complementary assessment, case management, and evaluation tools, addressing the need of service providers to document and track consumer, family, agency, and community outcomes over time. Site includes an overview, a slide presentation, examples of indicators, community scales, an online tutorial, reports, and related links.

Outcome Measurement Resource Network

national.unitedway.org/outcomes

Provides resources and information on outcomes for United Way sites and other organizations. Site describes resources, shows examples of current initiatives using the framework, and provides an on-line resource library.

Out-of-School Evaluation Database

www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/evaldatabase.html

The Harvard Family Research Project compiles this one-of-a-kind, searchable database of evaluations of 21 out-of-school-time programs, with 5 added per quarter.

Promising Practices Network on Children, Families, and Communities

www.promisingpractices.net

A source for easy-to-understand descriptions and reliable information on services, activities, approaches, and policies that have been shown to achieve results for children and families. Programs and activities are grouped according to the following outcomes: healthy and safe children; children ready for school; children succeeding in school; strong families; and self-sufficient families.

Results Mapping Laboratory

www.pire.org/resultsmapping

Provides an overview and resources on approaches to results mapping (translating qualitative success stories into hard data) and outcome engineering through journey mapping (focusing on the attainment of results and growth attainment that identifies markers of success).

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Practice Family Support? PROVE IT!

Programs Such as FamiliesFORWARD Are Getting Family Support Certified

Last spring, FamiliesFORWARD became one of the first family support programs in the nation to become certified by Family Support America.

FamiliesFORWARD, a school-based program in Cincinnati, Ohio, became certified in order to show families, funders, and others that it takes the principles of family support practice to heart in all of its activities. The program's mission is to support the development of confident and capable children; strong, nurturing, involved families; successful schools; and an engaged, active, and supportive community.

FamiliesFORWARD builds children's capacity to be powerful agents for their own development. Its support services, home visits, community activities, and after-school programs are designed to offer positive and practical lessons, provide opportunities to practice what is learned, and guide children, in a culturally sensitive way, to apply new skills in the classroom and community.

Photo courtesy FamiliesFORWARD

Parent advisory boards help set the program's agenda, which includes community events such as black history programs, Unity Day, and the Giving Project. Residents also volunteer at FamiliesFORWARD, getting involved in the schools on a day-to-day basis.

What Does It Take to Get Certified?

To become a nationally certified family support program, FamiliesFORWARD completed a self-assesment that showed how it followed the principles of family support practice in key areas. It also secured recommendations from a board member, collaborating partners, and program participants. Stephen Fritsch, Clinical Director at TriHealth Community Outreach Programs, recommended FamiliesFORWARD because their collaboration "has dramatically expanded our capabilities as a program that offers psychological and clinical intervention, since FamiliesFORWARD targets all members of the community."

The program recently received the Cincinnati School Superintendent's Setting the Standard award and the NAACP Cincinnati branch's community service award. Its president, Betti J. Hinton, was named the *Cincinnati Enquirer*'s Woman of the Year. And, as well as receiving visits from a number of prominent government officials, its staff members were recently invited to Washington, D.C., by President Bush for the signing of the Leave No Child Behind Act.

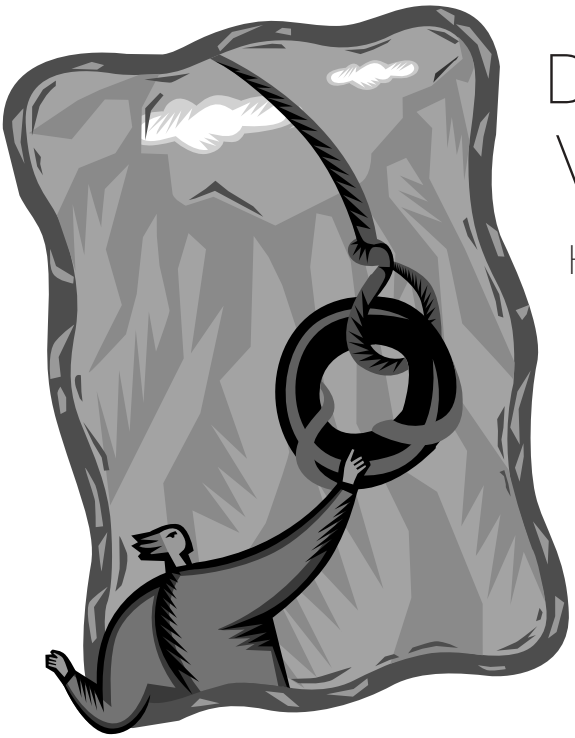
Certified family support programs publicize their commitment to family support with their certificates, customized stationery, t-shirts, and mugs, and a special listing on the National Family Support Mapping Project Web site at www.familysupportamerica.org.

To learn more about Family Support Program Certification and how your center can apply, visit www.familysupportamerica.org or call 312/338-0900 x105.

—Guy Schingoethe

Other Family Support America–certified programs include:

- Cass Lake Community Family Service Center, Cass Lake, Minn.
- Center for Families of North Cambridge, Cambridge, Mass.
- Cummings-Stafford Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn.
- Evans Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn.
- Family Focus, Evanston, Evanston, Ill.
- Family Network, South Berkshire County Children's Health Program, Inc., Great Barrington, Mass.
- La Gente Project, Alamosa, Colo.
- Northside Youth and Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn.
- Orange Mound Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn.
- Plymouth Family Network, Plymouth, Mass.
- Sheltering Arms, Atlanta, Ga.
- Wilkinsburg Family Support Center, Pittsburgh, Pa.



Domestic Violence

How Your Program Can Help Families

Family support programs have strengths and weaknesses when it comes to dealing with domestic violence. On the one hand, the strong, trusting relationships that family support staff build with families put them in a good position to help prevent and respond to domestic violence. On the other hand, because of their emphasis on prevention, family support programs often are less prepared to handle the crises that come up in these families. But the time to *get* prepared isn't when a crisis springs up; by then it's often too late for the program to have any impact. Following are some of the key considerations for family support programs in dealing with domestic violence. Because of the difficulty of addressing these issues in a way that is appropriate and supportive for all family members, programs must maintain close collaboration with programs that specialize in providing domestic violence–related services.

The Issues

Domestic violence is a serious problem in our society. More than four million incidents of domestic abuse are reported each year, and evidence indicates that an equal number go unreported. In addition to the physical repercussions of domestic violence, there are many long-term psychological effects. This type of violence is typically not an isolated event, but a continuing pattern of assaultive and coercive behavior. After repeated physical and psychological attacks, victims are four times as likely to feel depressed and five-and-a-half times as likely to attempt suicide. They often turn to alcohol or drug abuse to combat feelings of shame or worthlessness.

Children who witness violence at home experience severe psychological distress and are at increased risk of developing behavioral and emotional problems. Many become victims of violence in childhood or in adulthood, and many become perpetrators as adults.

The damage done by domestic violence cannot be measured in dollars, but financial statistics are revealing: medical expenses related to domestic violence total three to five billion dollars annually, and businesses lose $100 million each year in lost income, sick leave, absenteeism, and other forms of non-productivity related to domestic abuse. More importantly, the abused partner often loses financial stability by leaving the perpetrator for safety. Up to 50 percent of all homeless women and children in America are fleeing domestic violence. Many are forced to return to the abusive situation because they cannot find long-term housing.

Working with Victims

Program staff must recognize the signs of domestic violence and create an environment in which victims see staff as approachable and feel certain that their discussions are confidential.

Although working with the entire family is fundamental to family support programs, the program's primary responsibility in working with families in which domestic abuse has occurred is to ensure the safety of the victim and any children involved. Family support programs must be able to provide a

safe environment, not only ensuring physical safety at the program site, but ensuring that victims and witnesses feel safe expressing themselves. Again, staff must be sensitized to domestic violence and foster trusting relationships with victims and potential victims.

Many victims of domestic violence are overcome with a sense of powerlessness and shame. Family support programs must seek the strengths of their participants, and in so doing assist victims in becoming more confident and capable of taking control of their lives.

Working with Perpetrators

Especially when working with perpetrators, it is very important for family support programs to collaborate with programs that specialize in domestic abuse–related services. Many of them offer perpetrators an environment in which to explore their anger and fear of abandonment safely, and help them learn ways of handling intense emotions. Working with the whole family is standard in family support, but programs must consider how providing services to both perpetrators and victims would affect the physical and psychological safety of victims who seek the program's support.

Meeting Children's Needs

Children are strongly affected when their parents are in abusive relationships. They may fear for their safety, grapple with conflicting loyalties, and face the possible dissolution of their families. Family support staff need to provide these children, either directly or through referral, with counseling and supportive interaction with caring adults.

Additionally, children may suffer from a parent's temporary inability to provide stable care and support due to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other conditions that result from abuse. Programs should ensure that families have access to respite care, and should involve the children in supervised activities in a safe environment.

Children who have witnessed violence at home are at a high risk of becoming perpetrators and victims later in life. Classes and activities that help children and adolescents learn anger management and conflict resolution skills can reduce their risk of involvement in violent situations later on.

From Family Support America (rev. 2001) Family Support and Domestic Violence fact sheet. To receive this or other family support fact sheets at no charge, call 312/338-0900.

Putting Domestic Violence Counseling To Work

When domestic violence experts saw federal welfare reform approaching, they predicted trouble. Studies had shown a disproportionate number of women on welfare were victims of domestic violence, and that this abuse made it extremely difficult for them to keep a job or get job training—and now time limits would require them to do so. They succeeded in adding the Family Violence Option to the legislation, allowing states to waive work requirements and time limits and increase support services when domestic violence is an issue, without being penalized financially.

In states using the option, the worlds of domestic violence services and job training are meeting—often for the first time, and without knowing exactly how to work together. That's why Kraft Foods has sponsored the Domestic Violence Grant Program. The program places a domestic violence counselor on-site at job training programs in each of five cities: Richmond, Virginia; Denver; Seattle; Chicago; and Houston. The latter three will continue the project beyond its pilot year, 2000–2001.

Lise McKean, a staff member at the Center for Impact Research, which is evaluating the project, says one key to its success has been making the domestic violence counselor available at all times that the job training program is open. "It's been very important that participants see her as approachable and integrated with the program; they need to be familiar with her" in order to take the difficult step of seeking help. That familiarity is boosted when the counselor also sits in on classes and other job training activities.

Also crucial is the cross-training that the two different kinds of professionals get. Job training staff learn how to identify potential victims of domestic violence and what to do once a woman is identified. Domestic violence counselors learn more about the job-related issues that specific women are facing.

While the program focuses specifically on the women involved in training, staff make a point of providing information about and referrals to counseling, emergency food and supplies, and other services for the entire family.

For more information, visit www.impactresearch.org.

—Jacqueline Lalley

Developing Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence produces multiple and long-ranging effects on victims, children, perpetrators, and other family members—and it also affects the community at large. Together with neighborhood residents and representatives of other community groups, you can begin to explore issues of domestic violence for your neighborhood by:

Becoming Informed

• ***Talk to local families affected by the problem.*** Sit in on a session of a support group for battered women or a group for men who batter. Find out whether the local counseling agency, women's center, family support center, faith-based organization, or health clinic serves battered women and their families. Ask staff members at that agency to convene a group of women or men for you to talk to. Ask them what kind of help they would like to see in their neighborhood.

• ***Meet with the local domestic violence program and batterer intervention project.*** If there is a domestic violence organization in your community, ask the members to describe the need in the community and explain the range of services available locally. They also can provide you with brochures describing all of the domestic violence services for women, men, and children in the area.

Helping through Partnerships

• ***Designate a local organizer and group of residents to survey the neighborhood about its needs.*** The survey team may want to talk to residents about the problems posed by domestic violence and the nature and incidence of such problems in the neighborhood.

• ***Conduct basic community education about domestic violence and its effects on families.*** Local media outlets can use radio, television, and print ads from There's No Excuse for Domestic Violence, the public education campaign developed by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (for more info, visit www.fvpv.org). Also available from the prevention fund is a 12-part educational radio drama, *It's Your Business*, developed and produced specifically for African American communities. Both products include action-oriented print materials that encourage individuals and communities to intervene against abuse, and both suggest ways to do so safely and effectively.

• ***Hire or support local outreach workers or advocates.*** For example, you could ask an already established domestic violence program to assign an outreach worker in your neighborhood. You could ask a local social service agency or health clinic to assign a staff member to specialize in assisting abused women and their families. Or, you could start a batterers' intervention group within a neighborhood counseling clinic.

Adapted from Developing Community Responses to Domestic Violence, *published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation as part of its Making Connections initiative. This and other resources are available on-line at www.aecf.org/tarc.*

Habitat for Humanity International

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Sharon Larkin, mother of two active boys and Divisional Vice President of Human Resources.

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Parents and Partners Take the Lead in Connecticut

by Kristine Stanik

If anyone has realized the vision that real change can only occur with top-down, bottom-up collaboration—shared leadership—it's the people of Connecticut. The list of family-support initiatives and activities in the state is long and varied: it boasts 61 state-supported, school-based family support centers, an acclaimed parent leadership training program, and a new parent-policymaker coalition to reform the children's behavioral health system, to name a few.

The tie that binds such far-reaching efforts: a commitment on the part of government, private funders, and communities themselves to the principles of family support practice. It's a commitment made real through the strategic involvement of parents in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of programs throughout the state.

Building a Base for Families

At the level of state government, Connecticut is taking to heart the family support principle of forming relationships of equality and respect—indeed, the model for partnership in the state starts at the top. Since 1996, Connecticut has been one of eight participants in the Family Support America States Initiative, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to advance statewide family support agendas. With technical assistance and training from Family Support America, the state has succeeded in strengthening parent leadership opportunities, bringing family support into the schools, and building public enthusiasm through annual week-long Family Day activities.

Charter Oak Family Resource Center, West Hartford

John Atashian

John Atashian

Plymouth Family Resource Center, Plymouth

Family Support Connecticut provides a framework for the directors of the state's health, education, and human services agencies to work together to coordinate family support efforts in communities throughout the state. Together, they've secured support for such innovative programs as School-Based Family Resource Centers, Parent Education and Support Centers, the Parent Leadership Training Institute, and, most recently, the Parent Trust Fund.

A commitment to partnership is key to the state's accomplishments. "It takes a whole neighborhood to make sure that children grow up safe and healthy," says Connecticut Department of Children and Families Commissioner Kristine D. Ragaglia. "Communities must share in the responsibility of creating partnerships that can respond to families' strengths and needs."

Parents Push for Change

Of course, these partnerships aren't restricted to collaborations among government agencies, private funders, and nonprofit family advocacy organizations. True to the principles of family support, they include families as partners as well.

Connecticut's Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), developed through the state's Commission on Children in partnership with parents throughout the state, has opened the door for parents to become equal partners in creating family-supportive systems. The progressive leadership initiative trains parents in civics and democracy—giving them the skills and knowledge to effectively advocate for themselves and their communities. Piloted in Hartford in 1992, the 20-week course is now offered to parents in 14 communities throughout the state.

The skills parents develop through PLTI help them bring positive change to their own lives, their families, and their communities. "Parents learn how to interact within society with purpose and positive outcomes for children," says Elaine Zimmerman, executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Children and co-author of the PLTI curriculum. "This is a different kind of parent education. It offers parents hope, empowerment and the democracy skills necessary to enter public life for the next generation."

She cites numerous examples of how parents have turned their training into community change: One parent graduate stopped a children's library from closing. Another created a neighborhood library with books in Spanish, in partnership with her community's public library. A grandmother created a program for grandparents raising grandchildren and began to influence state policy on extended family supports. And a father generated an entire municipal parent network to influence public policy for the next generation. Several graduates have run for office, becoming city council and school board leaders themselves.

"I came to PLTI to gain the tools I need to bring men together, to make a statement about our commitment to our families," says Rod Malloy, a parent participant in the spring 2002 PLTI class in Danbury, sponsored by Danbury Children First. "PLTI has connected me to important resources, organizations, and

Linda Kosko

2002 Parent Leadership Training Institute class, Danbury

events, and specific tools that I have not found anywhere else."

"The impact of PLTI has been life-altering," says Sharon Williams, director of parent engagement at the Commission for Children. "It doesn't only effect the participants, it also changes the lives of design team members, facilitators, and the community."

Just ask Jackie Maldonado. A graduate of a PLTI course offered in Hartford, she learned how to talk with her neighbors about public issues and ultimately secured an $18 million commitment from the state to build new, safer housing in her community (see *AFSM* vol. 20, no. 4).

Or Patti Keckeisen. Also a PLTI graduate, in Danbury, she recently made the move to PLTI facilitator, training parents like her in new PLTI classes. "The three greatest things I have done in my life are marry my husband, have two wonderful children, and facilitate parent leadership," she recently told Danbury Children First's *Parent to Parent* newsletter. "Real power in parent leadership comes when parents recognize that they need to advocate for other people's children and not only their own. The effect becomes a movement, which affects public policy."

Each graduating class gives a speech in the state assembly and the Secretary of State awards diplomas embossed with the state seal. The example parents set for their children by participating in the training is priceless, says Zimmerman. "It offers children a deep and acquired sense that they can lead outside their homes in constructive, creative ways. The outside world pours in with meaning, and the expectation that each generation will make the world an even better place."

Janet Ward, a current PLTI participant in Danbury, agrees: "As parents, we are shaping the next generation," she explains. "I want to help empower parents to understand the importance of their presence in their children's lives and how much power we have as parents to shape the future."

Family Support in the Schools

Parents also find avenues for community involvement and leadership through the schools. A pioneer in providing school-based family support centers, Connecticut provides more than $11 million to 61 school-based Family Resource Centers (FRCs) throughout the state—centers that offer a range of services and supports for families, including preschool and school-age care, home visiting for expectant parents, adult education, and information and referral services.

Begun in 1989 by the state Department of Education, and based on the Schools of the 21st Century concept developed by Dr. Edward Zigler of Yale University, the program has expanded exponentially from its original three centers—a growth of 564 percent. The secret to its success, says the Department of Education, is buy-in from the communities in which the centers are based.

The FRCs collaborate with many resources in their communities, including childcare providers, School Readiness Councils, local United Ways, and service providers of the departments of social services and children and families. Together, these partners help the centers provide flexible family support and childcare services molded to each community's needs.

In Hartford, for example, the United Way of the Capital Area, the Village for Families and Children, and Girls and Boys Town work together to support more than a dozen school-based centers. Because of the financial and administrative supports they provide, many Hartford centers have been able to stay open all summer, offering camp programs that combine tutoring with educational and team-building activities—including field trips to the aquarium, air and space museum, science museum, and local parks.

Abdul Rahmann-Muhammad, senior vice president of community support services at the Village for Families and Children, says participants in the summer camps have already shown improvements in math, spelling, and computer proficiency scores. In addition to helping to organize the summer camp program, he's working with Village-funded FRCs to implement such services as:

- Spanish/English conversation workshops, run by bilingual parents
- Father involvement programs for young dads
- Entrepreneurial workshops for unemployed parents who want to open home businesses

And at six Hartford-area elementary and middle schools, the United Way of the

Capital Area and Girls and Boys Town are partnering with Family Resource Centers to offer a classroom management program that couples social skills with academic learning to teach children how to make positive decisions. All school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, family support workers, and security personnel receive training in the program.

"The value of this partnership is that it demonstrates how people who work with children in the public schools and the community can come together and focus on a shared objective," says George Bahamonde, president and chief executive officer of United Way of the Capital Area and a board member of Family Support America. "And that objective is to help children succeed."

Housing the centers in schools not only helps families access services, it also creates opportunities for parents to become more involved in their children's education.

Therese Horn, a fifth-grade teacher at Charter Oak Family Resource Center in West Hartford, explains: "If you want [parents] to be involved, you need to give them opportunities. At first, parents may put up a wall between the school and the family. But if a mother comes to a playgroup with her toddler, for example, it builds up her comfort zone in the school. She'll discuss things with the parent educator, which builds a bridge for talking with the teachers and being present in the classroom and on field trips."

A Family-Supportive System of Care

Also partnering to promote healthy Connecticut families are the state's human service and health agencies, local departments of public health, foundations—and, yes, parents.

In January of 2001, the state legislature approved $23 million to kick off Connecticut Community KidCare, a new partnership between Connecticut's Departments of Social Services and Children and Families to reform the way children receive behavioral health services throughout the state. Officials hope KidCare will plug gaps in the state's child mental health services, which have led to hundreds of children being placed in out-of-state residential treatment.

"We want to keep kids with their families and in their communities," says Ragaglia.

Scheduled to begin in July 2002, KidCare will be driven by the needs and preferences of the children and families served. Its key features include:

- Comprehensive, flexible behavioral health treatment and support services
- Community-based, culturally competent care planning and service delivery
- Families as decision makers
- Local control of care balanced with statewide administrative support
- Care coordinators, who create individualized plans for each family
- Family advocates who can provide support and mentoring to parents
- Funding for a family support organization to ensure that families have voice, access, and ownership in the development and implementation of their service plans
- Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services, a community-based crisis hotline that connects parents to a team of psychiatric professionals who can stabilize the situation, either on the phone or in the family's home

Through such services and supports, KidCare will reach kids with emotional and behavioral disturbances who otherwise would be admitted to hospital emergency departments—and, often, transferred to treatment facilities far from their homes.

"This new program will allow us to keep more children with behavioral health problems out of hospitals, and in their own communities, where they have the best chance to get the help they need," says Connecticut Governor John Rowland.

Partnering to Revitalize Hartford

Long seen as a city plagued with problems of poverty and urban blight, Hartford is beginning to remake itself into a model of revitalization—with a little help from its friends and families. Partners throughout the city have been working overtime to bring prosperity back to the city's urban core, with much success.

A stunning example of how such determination and collaboration can turn despair into dynamic change is Hartford's Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. In January of 1996, the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA)—Trinity College, Hartford Hospital, Connecticut Children's Med-

John Atashian

SAND Family Resource Center, Hartford

John Atashian

SAND Family Resource Center, Hartford

ical Center, the Institute of Living, and Connecticut Public Television and Radio—launched the $175 million initiative to build a central hub of educational, health, family support, and economic development activities in a formerly blighted neighborhood.

The project is revitalizing a 15-square-block area of the city by creating an infrastructure that encourages stable home ownership, supports neighborhood economic development, and provides educational resources for children, youth, and families. The cornerstone of the initiative is the Learning Corridor, a 16-acre campus adjacent to Trinity College that is home to:

- A Montessori Magnet Elementary School
- Hartford Magnet Middle School
- Two regional high schools
- A Boys & Girls Club
- The Aetna Center for Families

SINA expects the initiative—which will weave housing rehabilitation, neighborhood retail businesses, streetscape improvements, job training, recreation, and family services into the fabric of the community—to generate more then $130 in new construction.

Says Governor Roland, "The state is actively supporting this collaborative effort, which is built on education and home ownership at its core. What is happening in Hartford, in these neighborhoods, holds promise and offers a model not just for struggling cities in Connecticut but also for cities across the country."

Spreading the Word

To gain public support for these project, Family Support Connecticut has worked tirelessly to spread the word about the promise of family support. Nowhere are these efforts more evident than in the state's Family Day celebration, a week-long, statewide event held each September that highlights Connecticut's commitment to families.

Family Day has received support from the state's most influential decision makers—it was enacted by state law in 1997 and is co-chaired by Governor Rowland and the First Lady as well as Senator Crisco, Chair of the Appropriations Committee of the General Assembly, and his wife. Although activities vary from year to year, the theme—Valuing Connecticut's Families … It's Everybody's Business—remains the same, reinforcing the day's message that families are Connecticut's greatest resource.

The event never fails to provide an opportunity for families, communities, family support workers and advocates, and policymakers from throughout the state to celebrate families and the supports provided them. Last year's celebrations were especially poignant. Held only days after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, they provided an opportunity to discuss how children and families can cope in the wake of disaster—and how communities can come together to help heal the wounds such tragedies inflict.

Choosing not to cancel the Family Day activities, but rather to use the event as a vehicle for reaching out to families under stress, the 2001 Family Day committee changed the kick-off event program to focus on addressing the psychological needs of children and families. Presentations were made by psychiatrists, pediatricians, professors and others educated in how to respond to tragedy and violence. Topics included:

- Dealing with tragedy
- Helping children cope
- Allowing ourselves to grieve and moving forward

Supporting Parents into the Future

To ensure that family support programs and policies throughout the state achieve their ultimate goal—empowering Connecticut families to shape their future—Connecticut recently took a huge, but necessary, step.

Up Close: Outcomes at a Parent Leadership Training Institute Site

A study conducted by a Parent Leadership Training Institute site in Stamford, Connecticut, found the following outcomes for parent graduates:

Employment
- 26.3% changed jobs
- 47.0% changed positions
- 63.1% changed management styles

Engagement
- 72.7% participated in a new organization
- 45.4% continued their practicum work
- 91.8% voted in 1999

Improved Relationships
- 68.1% reported improved relationships with their children
- 45.4% reported improved school behavior among their children

Source: Sharon Williams, Director of Parent Engagement, Connecticut Commission for Children

In June of 2001, the General Assembly passed a bill creating a Parent Trust Fund that, according to the legislation, "shall be used to fund programs aimed at improving the health, safety and education of children by training parents in civic leadership skills and supporting increased, sustained, quality parental engagement in community affairs."

The legislation is a landmark step in embedding parent leadership into the infrastructure of state- and community-level family-serving systems—the first such legislation enacted in any state. Instrumental in crafting the bill and ensuring its passage were members of Family Support Connecticut's core team, who based their efforts on a new Shared Leadership consensus process piloted by Family Support America in 2000.

The need for the trust fund, notes Sharon Williams of the Commission on Children, stemmed from the reality that parents were not often encouraged to participate in policy decisions affecting their children and communities. "The term trust is an intentional play on word," she explains, "creating a trust of dollars for training parents and a request to policymakers and service providers to trust parents as their children's first teachers."

Through the fund, community-based programs can apply for amounts of up to $20,000 to sponsor civics training that promotes financial sustainability and reflects the diversity of the community. To qualify, they must also secure support from the communities they serve—a 50 percent local match is required to receive funding from the trust fund, 25 percent in cash and 25 percent in in-kind support.

Funded in part from Family Support Connecticut's Robert Wood Johnson Foundation support and a grant from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, the trust fund's private contributions were matched by the state's Departments of Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Children and Families, and Social Services. The Department of Children and Families, the Connecticut Commission on Children, the Children's Trust Fund, and the Governor's Prevention Partnership are also providing support through staff time, resource materials, and technical assistance.

True to the mission of the Parent Trust Fund, parents will comprise 50 percent of the fund's leadership council, helped select its project manager, and will serve on all of its decision-making committee. Together, the parents, state agencies, and private partners who brought the trust fund to life are creating an infrastructure that will promote parent leaders—and strong, active communities—long into the future.

Kristine Stanik is assistant editor of *America's Family Support Magazine*.

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A parent volunteer at Dvorak Elementary School in Chicago helps children walk safely to school and back. The school partners with Family Focus Lawndale, a local family support center, to help Dvorak parents mobilize an active group of volunteers.

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How to Find—and Keep—Volunteers for Your Center

With budget cuts and the ever-present struggle to make ends meet, using volunteers can help family support centers meet the needs of the families they serve. It can also empower community residents and add to a center's credibility. Yet finding—and keeping—volunteers requires ongoing planning and management. With plenty of both, developing a volunteer program can be a win-win situation.

Why People Volunteer

The reasons people give for volunteering are as various as the people themselves. No two volunteers have exactly the same motivation or set of goals and expectations—in fact, this is probably one of the most exciting aspects of working with volunteers. Some of the most common reasons people give are to:

- Make a contribution
- Express values
- Socialize and remain connected
- Increase job skills and climb the "career ladder"

Although no volunteer program can meet every need of every volunteer, it is important to try to do just that. When interviewing volunteers, ask applicants why they want to volunteer and what they hope to get out of the experience. Your volunteer program will be more successful if you begin by listening to the volunteer's needs, desires, and motivation for serving—and then respond by giving them tasks and projects harmonious with those motivations.

Where to Find Volunteers

The first step to successfully recruiting volunteers is knowing where to look. Potential volunteers are everywhere, but if they don't know about your center and the opportunities available there, how can they help? Following are five valuable sources for recruiting volunteers. Don't feel limited to these sources, though—be creative in trying new avenues, too!

Parents and Other Residents

To reach parents in your community, go door to door to let them know what is available at your center and encourage them to stop by. Make it clear that their feedback is wanted, and welcome their opinions on matters pertaining to the community and the center. Asking parents for their advice and actively listening to them is an expression of sincerity that will make the center more credible in their eyes. As their trust grows, parents will be more likely to become active and to feel comfortable volunteering. Offer them tangible incentives to volunteer, such as food, transportation, and free childcare.

Through volunteering, community members can become familiar with the center and its services and convinced of your desire to serve them. And, they will be likely to mention the center to other friends and neighbors who may want to become

involved as participants or volunteers—or both!

The Corporate Community

Many companies encourage their employees to serve the local community through volunteer work. Establishing volunteer programs allows companies to establish a respected image in the community; employees and residents see that they are concerned about more than the bottom line. This pool of volunteers could be a great asset to your center—not only because of their professional experience, but also because of their access to other community resources.

High Schools and Higher Ed

High school, undergraduate, and graduate students often have to meet volunteer requirements to graduate. Other students volunteer because of their involvement in a civic or philanthropic organization, to expose themselves to different careers, or simply because they want to.

Principals, assistant principals, deans, and guidance counselors can serve as liaisons to link your center with potential student volunteers. You can also contact specific academic departments—such as social work, sociology, psychology, elementary education, and special education—for information on student interns. To reach other students, try contacting offices of student affairs, student activities, or student leadership; colleges' panhellenic offices (for fraternity and sorority members); or campus ministry centers.

Senior Citizen and Retirement Groups

Older adults are a great source of volunteers. Not only do they often have professional skills from their working experience, but they also have varied life skills.

Contact local retirement groups as well as national organizations such as the Corporation for National Service, which has a senior service corps that places people 55 and older in volunteer opportunities related to their interests. (Visit www.cns.gov or call 800/424-8867 for more information.)

Churches and Civic and Professional Groups

Establish a rapport with community churches, which often include active members seeking opportunities to volunteer. Many communities also have active chapters of such groups as Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Jaycees, and PTA. These groups, as well as professional groups and associations, are good potential sources of volunteers.

Keeping Volunteers Happy

Once you've recruited volunteers for your center, make sure to provide them with a rewarding and structured experience. They may not be willing to perform menial, poorly planned tasks—and if they're not happy, they won't come back!

To ensure volunteers' satisfaction and your program's success, make sure you have a clear sense of your center's needs and resources. Carefully plan the activities volunteers will take part in. Treat them professionally, treat their duties as important, and provide plenty of supervision. Above all, always remember to follow the first principle of family support practice: ground all of your work with volunteers in relationships based on equality and respect.

Adapted from Family Support Centers: A Program Manager's Toolkit *(Chicago: Family Support America, 2000). To order, visit www.familysupportamerica.org or call 312/338-0900 x155.*

Tips for Training Volunteers

Training volunteers should be an important part of any volunteer program—it ensures that volunteers understand their duties and will perform them to your center's standards. It can also shorten the time it takes for volunteers, who are mostly part-time, to become familiar with their work and gives them confidence in performing their duties. If volunteers at your center are confused and uncertain about what is expected of them, they will be more likely to leave and volunteer elsewhere.

To develop a training program for your volunteers, consider what they should know and be able to do, as well as the attitudes and perspectives essential for being able to do those jobs. While the necessary knowledge and skills will vary greatly depending on the services you offer and the types of volunteers you recruit, all volunteers should be familiar with:

- The specifics of the job and who to go to with questions
- The center's mission, philosophy, history, and organizational structure
- The center's programs and services
- Who uses the center; the culture of the families being served; and the needs, issues, and circumstances that typically bring families to seek involvement or help
- The specific skills needed to work with families
- The types of interaction and boundary setting necessary between volunteers and families and between volunteers and staff members
- The administrative functions that keep the center going
- The relationships that exist between the center and other service providers in the community
- The center's decision-making processes

Programs Honored for Making Families Count

In November, the Annie E. Casey Foundation awarded $500,000 to each of eight family support programs from across the country as part of its 2002 Families Count honors program. The settings and activities of these award-winning programs are as diverse as their participants, yet each shares a common tie: an unwavering commitment to the principles of family support practice. We profile these model programs here.

The Power of Parents

The Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Project in Nashville, Tennessee, trains community members to visit pregnant woman and new mothers in the rural and urban South—women who often gain the strength to serve as advocates for their children. One of the oldest models of parenting education programs in the country, the approach has been featured in Family Support America publications and replicated by family support programs nationwide.

Culver City, California–based Mar Vista Family Center also doesn't just advocate for parents—it empowers parents to advocate for themselves. With families guiding every step of its development, the center is creating community transformation and parent leaders through a comprehensive program grounded in shared responsibility and parent participation. Currently featured on Family Support America's on-line map of family support programs, Mar Vista also offers mental health services, health education, job training, and other services.

Investing in Communities—One Family at a Time

An active Family Support America member, Chicago-based Bethel New Life knows all about making families—and investment dollars—count. Since its founding in 1979, this faith-based community development corporation has relied on a

Carol Highsmith

Honoree Bethel New Life is a faith-based community development corporation in Chicago. It is directed by Family Support America board member Mary Nelson.

Carol Highsmith

Featured on Family Support America's on-line National Family Support Mapping Project, the Mar Vista Family Center empowers parents to create change in their community.

strengths-based, family-supportive approach to turn what others saw as liabilities, such as abandoned lots and buildings, into opportunities for investment and neighborhood empowerment.

Bethel recently bought an abandoned hospital in its West Side neighborhood, transforming the site into housing for the elderly, a community cultural center, and space for essential programs such as child development, parenting education, a credit union, and mental health services. All told, the organization has developed more than a thousand units of low-income housing, placed nearly five thousand people in jobs, and brought almost $100 million in new investments into a community with scant economic resources.

At Children of the Rainbow in San Diego, California, more than 200 children find creativity and kinship while neighborhood parents find jobs. Led by the former welfare recipient who started the centers, these family-supportive childcare centers are also developing a community development corporation to help with other family needs, such as housing and more jobs.

And in Cleveland, Ohio, Fatima Family Center serves as a gathering place for neighborhood families, offering GED courses, tutoring, vocational training, and a senior center—in addition to being the site of the neighborhood's only ATM!

"No one realized the resources, supports, and strong families we had here," says Fatima Director LaJean Ray-McNair, who also lives in the neighborhood. "This is an incredibly asset-rich community. We're right across the street from League Park, the city's African American Museum is here, and the neighborhood has a long history of home ownership. There are 25 other agencies here to share resources with, to coordinate programs, and collaborate on initiatives."

Celebrating Culture

A model for the fourth principle of family support practice—affirming and strengthening families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities—Alianza Dominicana brings together Dominican families to strengthen each other in their Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, New York. Its programs include day-care services coupled with job training for low-income women and a family center that helps new immigrant participants adjust to a new country.

The Washington, D.C.–based Latin American Youth Center also focuses on helping families define their own needs and strengths. Established in 1974 to assist Latino youth, it now draws vitality from the surrounding Vietnamese, African, African American, and Caribbean communities to enrich its blend of programs—ranging from job training and parent education to a public charter school.

And the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, a successful school-based family support center reaching more than 4,000 families in the heart of Boston's Asian American community, offers such integrated, culturally responsive services as childcare, after-school programs, intergenerational activities, and adult English as a Second Language classes.

Says Annie E. Casey Foundation President Douglas W. Nelson of this year's winners: "They are essential links in the networks that help all families thrive—neighbor and kin, faith-based and secular, formal and informal, public and private."

For more information about the Families Count program and this year's honorees, visit www.aecf.org/familiescount.

—Kristine Stanik

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The Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Project, featured in past issues of *America's Family Support Magazine*, has been replicated by programs nationwide.

Stephen Shames

On Common Turf

In New York's capital region, a family support collaboration is bridging the gaps between schools, child welfare, and other systems.

Photo: The Commission for Economic Opportunity provides family support services in Troy, in the capital region.

You've heard of—and probably been involved in—turf battles. Even among those who share a common interest in the well-being of children, there are hurdles to collaboration. New York's Family Support Capital District Collaborative stands as a model for overcoming those obstacles. Participants include parents, the School of Social Welfare at SUNY-Albany, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, Albany County Social Services, the United Way of Northeast New York, and Philip Schuyler Academy—and the list is growing.

It all started when 20 members of these groups went together to two Family Support America conferences, one in Jacksonville, Florida, and the other in Hartford, Connecticut. Afterward, they met to see how they could work together to strengthen families. For example, the principal of Philip Schuyler Academy, an elementary school, put out the call for help making his school family supportive. Now, he's got a full-service school on his hands. Sheila Poole, the county's director of children's services, said her staff needed training to carry out the principles of family support practice. Now, child welfare staff and administrators across the county are being trained on what Poole says are "cutting-edge models and interventions that have tremendous implications for us in our work with families."

It's all about bridging the work and breaking out of old confines. Katherine Briar-Lawson knows: now an academic—she's dean of the School of Social Welfare at SUNY-Albany—she used to be the assistant secretary for children, youth, and families for Washington state. The collaboration is a way for her students to learn family support practice (two are social workers at Philip Schuyler Academy) and pursue research to secure a future for it (several doctoral students are writing dissertations on family support). This commitment can keep family support alive "long after policy fads come and go." "Families and those who support them are the most significant investment sites and need to be the business of universities," says Briar-Lawson.

The United Way got involved because its community assessment last year showed that of all the services it could provide, family care should be a high priority—and because its board is committed to collaboration. It is funding the School of Social Welfare at SUNY-Albany to run at least three family support programs, build the collaborative, carry out a needs survey, publish best practices, identify and meet training needs, help programs evaluate their efforts, and apply for national foundation funding. "Our board supports our work with the Family Support Capital District Collaborative," says Bruce Stanley, executive vice president of the United Way of Northeast New York and one of the collaboration's co-chairs.

Continually, they've had what they call "summits" to keep in touch, draw others in, and continue helping each other—and to get their message across to elected officials, whom they invite to attend. Legislation has been drafted to revamp the child protective system in New York, and the group is working to move it forward.

By naming itself the Family Support Capital District Collaborative, the group places itself alongside New York regional networks like Family Support Long Island, Southern Tier, and Western District. All are within the bounds of Family Support New York, a statewide initiative drawing on technical assistance from Family Support America and funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Nationally, it's one of eight states that is part of the Family Support America States Initiative.

Family Support America Senior Advisor Gail Koser says the collaboration is "spawning neighborhood family support networks, with members acting as ambassadors in each other's communities."

To make it possible for others to use Family Support America conferences as a springboard for forming local and regional collaboratives, the organization offers special group conference rates. For information, call 877/388-FSA2.

—Jacqueline Lalley

A School Gets Adopted

The collaborative has "adopted" Philip Schuyler Academy in Albany and turned it into a full-service school offering:

- An after-school program tutored by students from another school
- Boys Only and Grow Girls same-sex support groups
- Basketball
- Coordination of volunteers from AmeriCorp, Help America Read, and SUNY
- A family support center
- A literacy collaborative for teachers
- A reading program for students
- Vista Volunteers: parents who start programs they think are needed
- School Banking giving students access to things they want through Time Dollars

"Since we became a full-service school," says co-principal Jerry Spicer, "More parents are coming in. Teachers are more comfortable working with the community, and vice versa. And the community knows we care."

Sharing the Power

A Gas and Electric Company Trains Reps in Family Support

The training video starts, "In the strengths-based approach, rather than telling them, 'You need this,' we have them share how we can be of help to them." Sound like training for family support program staff? Think again. This video is part of a 110-hour credentialing program for customer service staff in New York State Electric and Gas Corporation's Power Partner Program. While the program boosts the company's bottom line by increasing families' ability pay their bills, manager Patricia Boynton says it does much more than that: "Power Partner assists people in making changes in their lives—so their future does not involve threats of disconnection."

NYSEG Customer Rep Mary Black is attending Family Development Credentialing training.

Powerful Partnerships

NYSEG launched the program in 1998. Customers who meet an income level requirement and who agree to become part of a balanced billing plan are eligible for reduced charges on basic service; energy-saving services such as insulation, replacement windows and doors, and furnace and water heating inspections; and other supports.

But Boynton always knew that focusing exclusively on energy assistance wouldn't be enough. "During the design of Power Partner," she recalls, "we discovered something called Family Development"—a family support credentialing program known and used nationally. "Many of the concepts were already part of NYSEG's culture, such as mutual respect and cultural diversity." The fact that Family Development focuses on family strengths, and not problems, clinched the deal for Boynton. She knew it had to part of the Power Partner Program.

Personnel in the program receive a Family Development Credential by taking part in the New York State Family Development Training and Credentialing Program. These staff include customer service representatives who answer the phones as well as advocates who work with families on an ongoing basis. They're trained alongside front-line family workers from other agencies and organizations. Developed by the Cornell Empowering Families Project, the training program provides workers with the skills and competencies they need to help families develop their capacity to solve problems and achieve long-lasting self-reliance.

How does a family development approach change the working relationship with a customer? Jackie Petcosky, an advocate in the Power Partner Program, says she and her coworkers strive to treat all customers with respect and "look beneath the surface in all situations." They facilitate the process of family goal setting and refer customers to human service agencies that will help them meet those own goals. Families' goals have included "getting re-enrolled in Power Partner, keeping their children fed and clothed, getting financial assistance for health-related problems, and cleaning up their credit."

Impact on Corporate Culture

While the NYSEG Corporation, established in 1852, has always viewed itself as part of the larger community, the Power Partner Program has transformed this relationship. Lisa Tallet, the program's customer service supervisor, says, "We now look at a family as a whole, beyond their utility bill."

Tallet feels that the key to establishing an authentic relationship is respect: "People will open up when someone treats them with respect. From there, we can start to build a relationship with that customer because they know we truly care about them." NYSEG customer service reps consistently receive thank-you cards and letters. Tallet circulates the notes among staff to remind them of the impact they can have on customers' lives.

Staff use the strengths-based approach not just with customers, but with each other. Their common training "ties the group together with one common denominator," says Petcosky, so that they support each other "in a language everyone understands."

—Kerigan Steger

For more information about the Family Development Credential, contact Georgia Howe at 607/272-1522 or ghh2@cornell.edu.

What Families Have to Say

Since my auto accident, things were going downhill at an alarming rate. This program lifted me from the depths of despair to a hopeful life in which I am able to work part time and see the light at the end of the tunnel.

—Albert, Endicott, New York

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—Anna, Binghamton, New York

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Bulletin Board

- **Head Start 29th Annual Training Conference—The Nation's Pride: Promoting Quality Education for All Children**

  April 24–27, Phoenix, Ariz. Contact Ruby Lewis-Riar at 703/299-7502 or visit www.nhsa.org.

- **The 4th Annual International Fatherhood Conference: Fatherhood Challenges and Triumphs**

  May 27–29, Washington, D.C. Contact the National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership at 888/528-6725 or visit www.internationalfathers.org.

- **Research & Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health 9th Annual Conference: Building on Family Strengths**

  May 30–June 1, Portland, Ore. Visit www.rtc.pdx.edu.

- **The National Forum of the Coalition for Community Schools: Community Schools Work!**

  June 23–25, Washington, D.C. Contact the Coalition for Community Schools at 202/822-8405 or visit www.communityschools.org.

- **14th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect: Charting Our Progress toward Protection of Children Worldwide**

  July 7–10, Denver, Colo. Contact the Kempe Children's Foundation at 303/996-9997 or visit www.kempe.org.

- **Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting Conference—Choices in a Changing Culture: Empowering Decisionmaking for Youth, Families, and Communities**

  July 22–24, Anaheim, Calif. Contact the Child Welfare League of America at 202/638-2952 or visit www.cwla.org.

- **7th National Conference on Advancing School-Based Mental Health Programs**

  Sept. 19–21, Philadelphia, Pa. Contact the Center for School-Based Mental Health Assistance at 410/706-0980 or visit csmha.umaryland.edu/csmha2001/main.php3.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

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From the Soul

Stories of Great Black Parents and the Lives They Gave Us

by Phyllis Y. Harris

2001, 243 pp., hardcover, $24.95
G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York

Through the stories of 10 African American families who share their memories with honesty and tenderness, *From the Soul* gets at the essence of how parents can help children grow into adulthood at their full potential. Those looking for role models and an understanding of the values that nurture survival and success can find both in these powerful and warm testimonies.

Cancer in the Family

Helping Children Cope with a Parent's Illness

by Sue P. Heiney, Joan F. Hermann, et al.

2001, 218 pp., paperback, $18.95
American Cancer Society, Atlanta, Ga.

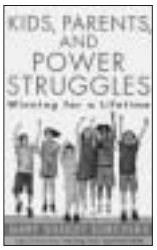
This guide for parents with cancer provides practical suggestions for helping children of all ages cope with the many stages of this disease that affects the entire family. By helping parents understand their children's emotional reactions in relation to their developmental levels, it prepares them to explain treatments, side effects, separation, and the possibility of recurrence and death. The book provides responses to children's most common questions and speaks to parents' need to address their own well-being so they can be in a better position to help their children. A special Kids Corner workbook section includes exercises to help children work through their feelings and experiences. A chapter on finding support services is augmented by a resource guide of books and organizations.

Kids, Parents, and Power Struggles

Winning for a Lifetime

by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka

2000, 320 pp., hardcover, $23.00
Harper Collins, New York



Many parents find the daily struggles with their children, from breakfast to bedtime, both exhausting and demoralizing. Kurcinka sees these struggles as opportunities for parents to teach their children essential life skills—such as handling one's emotions, problem solving, and working cooperatively with other. Through real-life stories and struggles, the author introduces a style of discipline called "emotion coaching," contending that parents and kids who understand their emotions and have skills to cope with them can turn power struggles into opportunities to build better relationships. Her approach fits well with recent works on the importance of emotional intelligence.

Through real-life stories and struggles, Kurcinka introduces a style of discipline called "emotion coaching." Her approach fits well with recent works on the importance of emotional intelligence.

Dim Sum, Bagels, and Grits

A Sourcebook for Multicultural Families

by Myra Alperson

2001, 268 pp., paperback, $14.00
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York

Multicultural families are growing in number, and the increasing diversity of culture, race, and religion within a single family—sometimes quite suddenly—makes this book particularly useful. Primarily addressed to adoptive parents, the book discusses the importance of incorporating birth culture and adoptive culture and ways to create a multicultural home that reflects multiple traditions and religious observances. It also includes a resource file of organizations, books, periodicals, Web sites, and sources of food products, clothing, and toys. The outlook is positive and enthusiastic, celebrating the richness of multicultural family life but not minimizing the special issues and potential problems faced by multicultural families.

Barbara Jordan is the author of several books on print and audiovisual resources for parents and family-serving professionals and is assistant director of Middle Country Public Library in New York, which houses an extensive multimedia family support collection and is the national model for the Family Place Library Project.

BOOKMARKS
www.techsoup.org

Tech Soup for the Nonprofit Soul

by Joe Creitz

Family support programs struggle to meet their technology needs. Finding funding is one challenge, but even when funding isn't an issue, the array of hardware, software, and services can make it hard to decide what's right for your organization. TechSoup (www.techsoup.org) is there to help nonprofits cut costs and simplify their technology choices. At TechSoup, users find reviews, advice, guidance, and the ability to purchase computers and software at substantial discounts.

Start your search with the site's home page (which will get a redesign early this year). Need a new computer? Click the "hardware" link on the TechSoup home page and you'll get a library of helpful articles giving recommendations. Considering a wireless network for your office? Just type "wireless networking" into the TechSoup search engine. Wondering how others have solved your technology problem in the past? Go to one of the message boards and post your question.

By using TechSoup's message boards, you can not only learn technology lessons from others, but, in the spirit of family support, share your own advice.

Getting and Giving Tech Advice

By using TechSoup's message boards, you can not only get lessons learned from others who have "been there," but—in the spirit of family support—share your own advice with others nationally. Message board topics range from the mundane ("my computer keeps freezing up") to the sublime ("how to get your Web site noticed with better user interface design"). Wondering whether an application service provider (ASP) might reduce your organization's software expenses? Or maybe you've never heard of an ASP? TechSoup's free bi-weekly e-mail newsletter, *By the Cup*, covered ASPs from start to finish in its January 10 edition. Desktops, laptops, servers, routers, databases, word processors, ASP, ISP, USB, MP3—if you have questions, TechSoup probably has the answers.

Response to the site in its first year has been uniformly positive, says TechSoup Program Director Matt Florence: "It was difficult to get the word out at first, but once they find us, our users are very loyal, and they really love the site." TechSoup was launched in May 2001 by CompuMentor. The San Francisco-based nonprofit has provided low-cost software and consulting to more than 23,000 nonprofits and schools serving low-income communities since 1987. By compiling content from other sources, creating new and original content, and providing those message boards, TechSoup has taken major steps toward its goal of being the primary Internet portal for nonprofits on technology.

The site's particular strength is providing beginner-level tips in everyday language as well as tech-savvy, in-depth information. Surveys show that the site's main users are administrative employees, nonprofit agency directors, and other nonprofit employees without specific technology skills. But Florence says even information technology professionals use the site.

The Bottom Line

Launched in January 2002, the DiscounTech store within the site allows nonprofits to purchase computer equipment and software on-line with minimal markups. TechSoup's deals with companies such as Microsoft, Semantec, and Cisco Systems allow the organization to cheaply supply software, computers, and networking equipment to nonprofits.

TechSoup's many attractions, and donated ads for the site gracing Web pages such as E-online, MSN, and AOL, make it likely that TechSoup's user base will continue to grow. And when TechSoup grows, users benefit—from the increased number of users available to help each other on the message boards and from low prices organizations like TechSoup get when they buy in bulk.

Joe Creitz is a freelance writer in San Francisco.

Quick Pick

America's Library
www.americaslibrary.gov

This site draws on the enormous collection of the Library of Congress to provide meaningful information about American history. It's educational, intuitive, and fun for kids, parents, and anyone who works with them.

Transitions

We bid a fond farewell to **Ignacio Lopez**, former senior communications associate for Family Support America, who has joined the staff of a community foundation in New York city. A staff member since December 1996, his many contributions to the organization included writing for *America's Family Support Magazine*.

Family Support America also expresses its gratitude to **Gerald Shanklin**, who as senior advisor for technical assistance shared his expertise in community economic development with the family support field for the past four years. We wish him all the best!

New From Family Support America

Family Support America has been working hard to produce a number of new publications to reflect the field's growing emphasis on promoting parent leadership and strengthening families' economic well-being.

Shared Leadership Series

Family Support America's new Shared Leadership booklet series shares recent findings in what works to promote parent leadership. The first, to be released in April, offers concrete recommendations on promoting parent leadership, along with real-life stories and personal testimonials showing the strategies in action. Later this year, a second booklet will give step-by-step instuctions and sample tools for carrying out a Shared Leadership event, which brings parents and other stakeholders together for consensus on issues of importance to families. Both booklets specifically address local programs and neighborhood networks as well as statewide and national organizations and agencies.

On Solid Ground Workbook

To be released in April, this workbook is a companion to the monograph of the same name published in 2001 by Family Support America. While the monograph covered the "why" and "how" of family-supportive community economic development, this workbook provides activities for putting those ideas into practice. This publication gives immediate, hands-on experience with practicing community economic development in a family-supportive way.

Gathering the Knowledge

Family Support America regularly convenes leaders from across the country who represent cutting-edge theories and practices in the family support movement. Recently, Family Support America convened national discussions on two key areas of development in the field:

Evaluation

November 14–16, 2001, in Princeton, New Jersey, a discussion on how to promote quality evaluation in the family support field drew 35 participants, including evaluators, researchers, parents, family support practitioners, community leaders, and foundation representatives. Family Support America convened the leaders with the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Child Well-Being

January 15–16, 2002, in Chicago, a variety of leaders met to discuss how we can improve the development and well-being of young children. The attendees examined how engaging parents and primary caregivers through holistic, community-based approaches impacts children's development. Family Support America convened the leaders with the support of Kraft Foods.

Proceedings from both of these meetings are available from Family Support America.

Family Support America Welcomes ...

The following have joined or become certified family support programs in the past quarter:

Certified Family Support Programs

Carnes Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn. • Cass Lake Community Family Service Center, Cass Lake, Minn. • Center for Families of North Cambridge, Cambridge, Mass. • Cummings-Stafford Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn. • Douglass Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn. • Evans Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn. • Families Forward, Cincinnati, Ohio • Family Focus—Evanston, Evanston, Ill. • Family Network—South Berkshire County Children's Health Program, Great Barrington, Mass. • Frayser Family Resource and Youth Service Center, Memphis, Tenn. • La Gente Project, Alamosa, Colo. • Northside Youth and Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn. • Orange Mound Family Resource Center, Memphis, Tenn. • Plymouth Family Network, Plymouth, Mass. • Sheltering Arms, Atlanta, Ga. • Wilkinsburg Family Support Center, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Organizational Members

Aurora Gonzalez Community & Family Resource Center, Toledo, Ohio • BC Association of Family Resource Programs, Vancouver, B.C., Canada • Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MA, Boston, Mass. • Branch Intermediate School District Family Support Program, Coldwater, Mich. • Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Head Start Program, Juneau, Ala. • Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento, Sacramento, Calif. • Child Opportunity Zone Parents As Teachers Program, North Kingstown, R.I. • Children's Mercy Hospital Family Friends Program, Kansas City, Mo. • Collaborative for Organizing Mt. Pleasant, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio • Comprehensive Health Education Foundation, Seattle, Wash. • DRU Family Support Center, Baltimore, Md. • Early Childhood Family Education Center, Northfield, Minn. • East Capital Center for Change, Washington, D.C. • East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, Washington, D.C. • Family Focus, Newport News, Va. • Friends of the Family, Van Nuys, Calif. • Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative, Washington, D.C. • Happy and Healthy Home, Santa Monica, Calif. • Hawaii Family Support Center, Honolulu, Hawaii • Homeless and Travelers Aid Society, Albany, N.Y. • Kent Family Center, Chestertown, Md. • Leelanau Children's Center, Leland, Mich. • Mental Health Association, New York, N.Y. • Naramake Family Resource Center, Inc., Norwalk, Conn. • North Carolina Family Resource Coalition, Southport, N.C. • Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. • Railroad Flat & West Point Healthy Start, Rail Road Flat, Calif. • Seattle Public Schools Office of Community Learning, Seattle, Wash. • Senior High Lake Shore Central Schools, Angola, N.Y. • St. Francis Foundation, St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada • Sycamores, South Pasadena, Calif. • Unified Family Center, Washougal, Wash. • University of Connecticut Cooperative Ext. People Empowering People Program, Haddam, Conn. • Washington County Community 2000 Partnership, Potosi, Mo. • We Care of Los Alamitos, Los Alamitos, Calif. • Weatherford ISD, Weatherford, Texas • Woodfords Family Services, Portland, Maine

Individual Members

Arnold L. Amposta, Marine Corps Family Team Building, Japan • Sheona Ayles, Alberta Child & Family Services, Hinton, Alberta, Canada • Carolyn Brooks, First Steps Region Two, Spartanburg, S.C. • Jacalyn Coyne, Farmington, Conn. • Sherie Credle, Learning Land, Kent, Wash. • Susanne Croasdaile, Charlottesville, Va. • Terese Curtin, Connecting for Children & Families, Woonsocket, R.I. • Rebecca T. Davis, Princeton, N.J. • Elizabeth Douglas, Edwardsville, Ill. • Bianca Genco, Albany, N.Y. • Barbara Gimperling, Child Care Connection, Inc., Gaitersburg, Md. • Kimberly Greder, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa • Cliffie C. Howard, Center for Community & Family Services Head Start Program, Altadena, Calif. • Debra Hyman, Ballard Family Center, Seattle, Wash. • Lorraine Long, Periwinkle Park, Woodstock, Ga. • Michael B. Marks, Youth Advocate Program, Inc., Saratoga Springs, N.Y. • Jenny McGrath, St. Francis Foundation, St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada • Lori Morgan, Community Connections for Families, McKeesport, Pa. • Deborah Proett Lukas, Parent Services Project, Inc., San Rafael, Calif. • Claire H. Rosenbaum, University Affiliated Program of Rhode Island, Cumberland, R.I. • Norma Sandoval, Lifelink, Bensenville, Ill. • Elizabeth Schneider, Schoolcraft College Bookstore, Livonia, Mich. • Sharon M. Shuttle, Shenandoah Valley Head Start, Fishersville, Va. • Vicki Sirockman, Child Watch, Pittsburgh, Pa. • Julie Theodore, Families Forward, Maineville, Ohio • Felesia Van Lee, Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness, Kemesaw, Ga. • Frederick I. Watson, Virginia Male Adolescent Network, Inc., Protsmouth, Va. • Bonnie Williamson, First Steps Region Two, Spartanburg, S.C. • Karen A. Wilson, Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative, Washington, D.C. • Deb Wright, Duluth Area Family Services Collaborative, Duluth, Minn.

Family Support America Thanks You!

Family Support at Work Leadership Roundtable

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To join Family Support America or the Family Support At Work Leadership Roundtable, or to become a Certified Family Support Program, contact Family Support America at 312/338-0900 x105. You can also join or download a certification application at www.familysupportamerica.org.

fam cam

Dani Werner

Cass Lake Community Family Service Center
Cass Lake, Minnesota

A home visitor, mom, and child share lunch at Cass Lake Community Family Service Center. A member of Family Support America, the center serves the Leech Lake reservation, home to more than 2,000 Ojibwe Native Americans, as well as a school district in rural Cass County. Its activities include Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education program, adult basic education, county social services, a health clinic, family literacy, kinship mentoring, welfare-to-work, school-based family support, a computer lab, and emergency food, clothing, and furniture.

Send us your photos!

If you are a member of Family Support America and have crisp photos of families in your community, submit them for publication on our Fam Cam page! If we select your photo, you get a free book from our family support collection. Send in glossy prints or slides with your contact information, a photo credit, and a caption to: Family Support America, America's Family Support Magazine, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60606.

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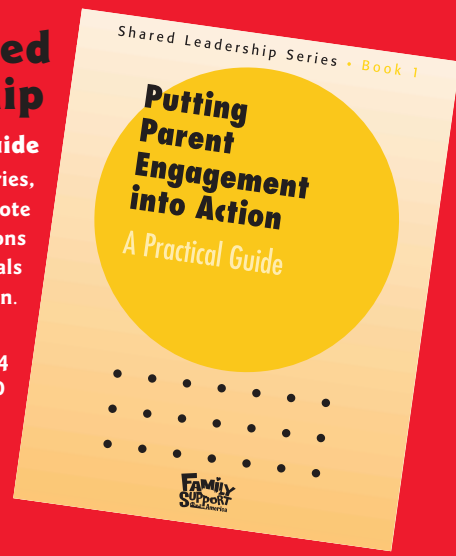
new from Family Support America!

Shared Leadership

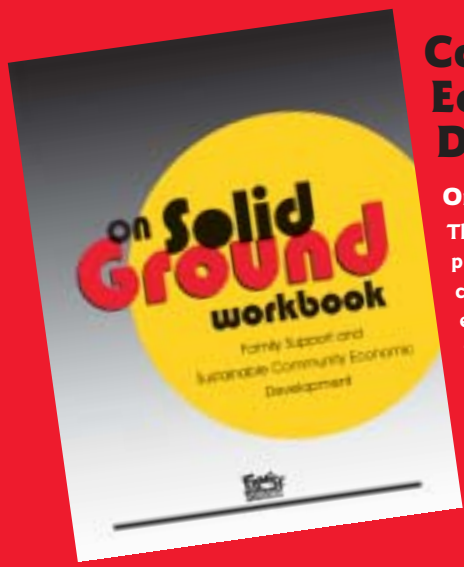


Putting Parent Engagement into Action: A Practical Guide

The first in Family Support America's Shared Leadership series, this booklet shares the most recent findings in what works to promote parent leadership. The publication offers concrete recommendations along with real-life stories and personal testimonials showing the strategies in action.

Item No. C194
Members: $12.50 Non-members: $15.00

Community Economic Development



On Solid Ground Workbook

This workbook is a companion to the monograph of the same name published in 2001 by Family Support America. While the monograph covered the "why" and "how" of family-supportive community economic development, this workbook provides activities for putting those ideas into practice. It gives immediate, hands-on experience with practicing community economic development in a family-supportive way.

Item No. C192
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